STORIES 250

WHERE WERE YOUR ANCESTORS ON JULY 4, 1776?

July 2026

PROJECT KIN

STORIES 250

WHERE WERE YOUR ANCESTORS ON JULY 4, 1776?

Magazine Copyright © 2026 by Barbara Tien for Projectkin and the individual work of the noted authors and creators. All rights reserved.

No part of this compilation may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the publisher, except as permitted by law.

Individual Contributions: Each individual article, blog post, and image included in this magazine is the property of its respective author. Contributions are reprinted with the express permission of the copyright holders. All rights to the individual works are retained by the original authors.

For inquiries and permission requests regarding the content in this magazine, please contact the individual authors or Barbara Tien at *Projectkin.org@gmail.com.*

Berkeley, California.

First Edition: July 2026

STORIES 250

WHERE WERE YOUR ANCESTORS ON JULY 4, 1776?

A commemorative collection of articles published by members of the Projectkin community.

PROJECT KIN

A PROJECTKIN COMPILATION
JULY 2026

*"**Great Seal**" Quilt, 1825 - 1840 created by **Susan Strong,** (4 July 1809 – 5 August 1875)*

***Learn more** about the unexpected modern history of this quilt at https://Projectkin.org/great-seal-quilt. Credit: National Museum of American History & Smithsonian Institution Archives. This image is in the public domain (free of copyright restrictions). High-resolution version: https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/object/nmah_556469*

SCAN ME
SCAN ME
SCAN ME
SCAN ME

PROJECT KIN

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

"Where were your ancestors on July 4, 1776?"

Explore the articles in this magazine on our website, in a timeline and on a map at

Projectkin.org/stories250

SCAN ME

A Note about Spelling:

With contributors from around the world, English spellings may be unfamiliar. All articles are spelled in the author's preferred form of English. I apologize (and apologise) for any inconvenience.

Genealogists and family historians have always understood how much our stories matter. They connect us to one another, our communities, and our shared history. In this project, Projectkin members stepped up to share their stories in answer to one simple question: "Where were your ancestors 250 years ago?"

With that question, America's 250th birthday becomes shared history. I may not have been there, but now I know someone whose ancestor was there, and I care about their story, too. In this project, we're bundling these stories in a commemorative, community edition. It tells us how the same events affected each of our families.

This magazine is supported by a companion website at Projectkin.org/stories250. The site includes videos of conversations with our authors, an interactive timeline, and a map. Links to our authors' sites give you ways to explore additional stories, voiceovers, videos, and more — as they're added in the weeks and months to come.

These stories first appeared on our contributors' blogs and publications. Every post includes links with QR code blocks to make it easy to access the digital companion materials, including footnotes and resources. We invite you to join the conversation by commenting to share your perspectives and stories.

Have comments, thoughts, or ideas to contribute? Join us online at ***Projectkin.org****. We'd love to hear from you.*

Barbara Tien
Ringleader at Projectkin

EXPLORE IN TIME

Credit: National Museum of American History & Smithsonian Institution Archives.

STORIES250: A TIMELINE FOR THE PROJECTKIN COMMUNITY

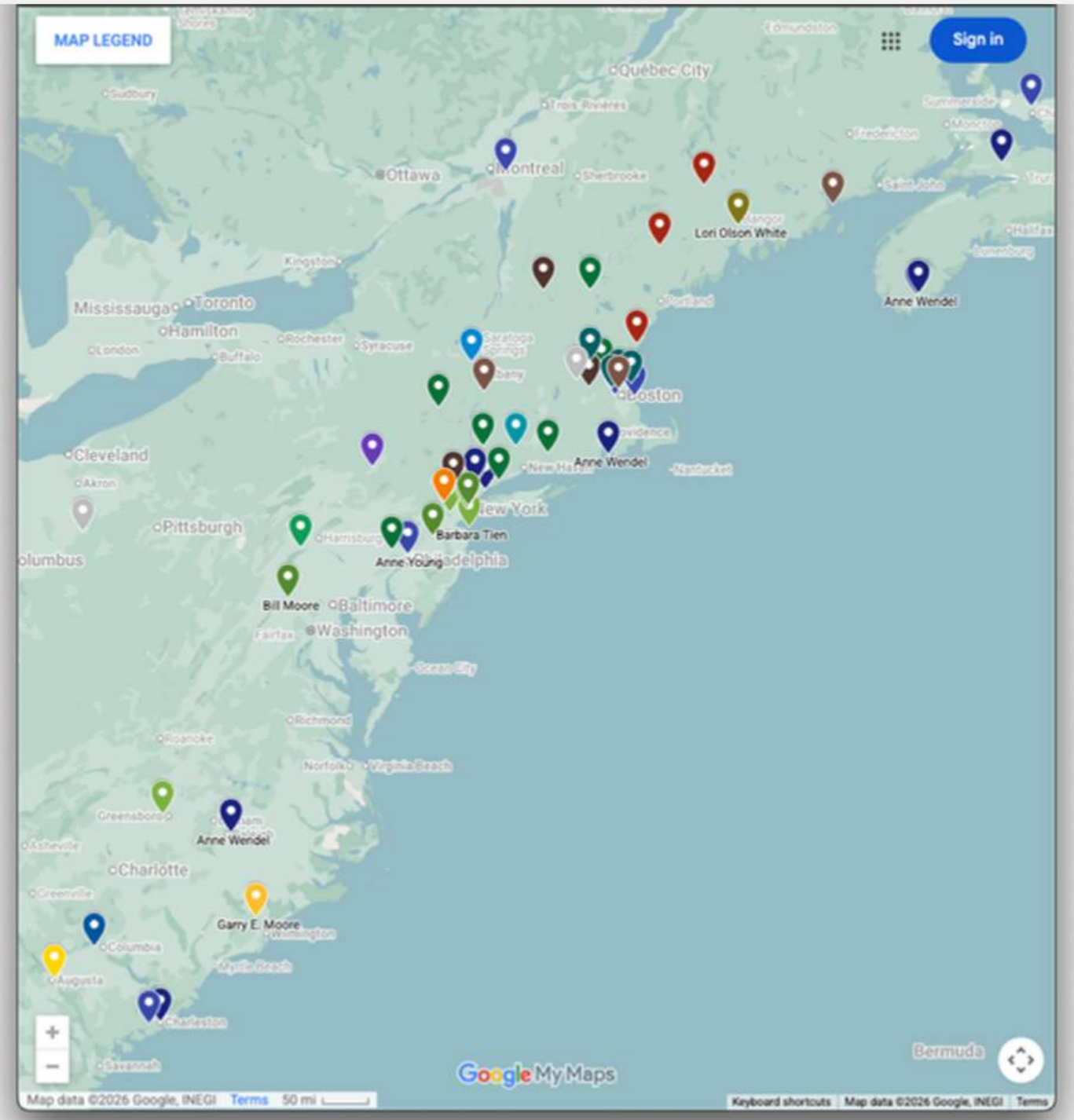
Our community takes you back, roughly 250 years ago, to the time of the American Revolution. *"This timeline places the stories of Projectkin community members on a shared timeline 50 years before and 50 years after the July 4th event commemorating the Declaration of Independence.* All members are welcome to submit stories for inclusion. It's free!" Explore post Our Ancestors' Stories at the Time of the American Revolution. Explore the map An interactive map of all of these stories.

SCAN ME

Projectkin.org/stories250-timeline

Explore the interactive timeline at this link or use the camera app on your mobile device to scan the code at left ⬅

EXPLORE IN PLACE



Projectkin.org/stories250-map

Explore the interactive timeline at this link or use the camera app on your mobile device to scan the code at right ⊠

SCAN ME

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ANNE WENDEL

ANNE YOUNG

BARBARA TIEN

BILL MOORE

CAROLE KUGE KAWAMURA

DAI DAVIES

DEBORAH CARL

DIANE BURLEY

ERIN HOOVER

GARRY E. MOORE

HEATHER ROJO

HELENE MCCLANAHAN

JANE CHAPMAN

KYLA BAYANG

LINDA STUFFLEBEAN

LORI OLSON WHITE

DR. MARY MARSHALL

MAUREEN TAYLOR

RANDY SEAVER

RICK LEONARD

RITA MCCONNELL

TAD CALLIN

Stories250
A Joint celebration of our ancestors stories at the time of the American Revolution
WATCH RECORDING
SCAN ME
SCAN ME

Anne Wendel

- My 5th Great-Grandparents Mary Coon and John Rushton in the Revolutionary War, 1727-1822 ..... p. 55
- Captain Joseph Durfee, 1734-1801 ..... p. 101
- Joel and Christian Simms, Revolutionary War Patriots, 1735-1801 ..... p. 113
- William Rowland, Armed Boatman, 1742-1813 ..... p. 155
- Sarah Hall Rushton, Cordwainer's Wife ~ Chapter One, 1753-1839 ..... p. 257
- Revolutionary War Cowboy: Jeremiah Rushton Stole for King and Country, 1757-1838 ..... p. 289
- The Map Our Ancestors Forgot, 1758-1836 ..... p. 315
- Isaac Williamson, Revolutionary War Private, 1758-1839 ..... p. 335
- Esther Crank and John B. Acker ~ Who They Left Behind, 1759-1786 ..... p. 349
- A German Teenager in the American Revolution: George Rector, 1759-1786 ..... p. 367
- Isaac Van Wart: Revolutionary War Hero, 1762-1828 ..... p. 391
- Black Loyalists of the American Revolution, 1775-1931 ..... p. 439
- Attack! and Fall, (Catherine Oxendine), 1778-1850 ..... p. 473

Anne Young

- George III: My Part in His Downfall, 1700-1772 ..... p. 21
- The Lexington Alarm: My Dana Relatives Respond to the Lexington Alarm of 19 April 1775, 1720-1830 ..... p. 33
- A Loyalist's Reward: One of My Mainwaring Cousins Fought with the British in the American Revolutionary War, 1744-1803 ..... p. 181
- A Pension for Eleanor Dana, Widow of Stephen Dana, Soldier of the Revolutionary War, 1744-1837 ..... p. 193
- Francis Skelly, a Diarist During the American Revolutionary War, 1751-1793 ..... p. 217
- John Stocking Chauncy: Cruelly Killed by the British, 1751-1777 ..... p. 233
- William Duff Captured in Quebec in 1775, 1754-1795 ..... p. 267

Barbara Tien

- Truth, Betsy Ross, and the Rabbit Hole, 1720-1795 ..... p. 37
- The Coffin Family: Through Line in the American Revolutionary War, 1720-1803 ... p. 45
- Private Ezekiel Ross: Revolutionary War and the Call of the West, 1756-1845 ..... p. 281

Bill Moore

- My Moore Family in America, 1704-1793 ..... p. 25
- Joshua Naylor: A Stories250 Revolutionary War Ancestor's Story, 1751-1835 ..... p. 237
- Clement Clarke Moore: My Moore Family in America, Part 4, 1779-1863 ..... p. 481

Carole Kuge Kawamura

- Toypurina. Tongva Kizh. Stories250, 1760-1799 ..... p. 377

Dai Davies

- Cellan's Lending Library: Education in a Small Welsh Place, 1765-1833 ..... p. 421

Deborah Carl

- The Original Grantees of Campton, New Hampshire, 1714-1789 ..... p. 27
- Ebenezer Bancroft – Killed in a Train Accident, 1738-1827 ..... p. 141
- The Original Grantees of Campton, New Hampshire: Peter Spencer and Aaron Cleveland, 1744-1778 ..... p. 185
- The Original Grantees of Campton, New Hampshire: Abel Willey, 1749-1834 ..... p. 183
- The Original Grantees of Campton, New Hampshire: John Southmayd, 1751-1839.. p. 225

- We Don't Believe You: Abel Patrick's Revolutionary War Pension, 1757-1844 ..... p. 311
- George Bentley, the Forgotten Patriot, 1758-1839 ..... p. 329
- The Original Grantees of Campton, New Hampshire: Christopher, John, Uriel, and Eliphalet Holmes, 1763-1777 ..... p. 411
- Left Behind, 1775-1905 ..... p. 435

Diane Burley

- Wait, Still: Faith, Fire, and the Price of Freedom, 1661-1748 ..... p. 13
- Raid of Royalton: The Barn That Didn't Burn, 1737-1797 ..... p. 133
- Jane Ryerson: Revolutionary War Wife and Flame Keeper, 1752-1829 ..... p. 251

Erin Hoover

- Three Cows and a Tea Kettle, 1749-1825 ..... p. 207

Garry E Moore

- Pioneers of Hunting Creek, Call to Arms, 1776 ..... p. 455

Heather Rojo

- Jonathan Flint of Reading, Massachusetts, 1730-1800 ..... p. 91
- Colonel Joshua Burnham of Milford, New Hampshire, 1754-1835 ..... p. 271
- Major Andrew Munroe of Lexington, Massachusetts. 1764-1836 ..... p. 417

Helene McClanahan

- Part 1: The Legendary Life of Pennsylvania & Kentucky Frontiersman John Hinkson, 1729-1789 ..... p. 73
- Bird's invasion of Kentucky & the attack on Hinkson's settlement, 1780 ..... p. 489

Jane Chapman

- Richard Lang: From Loyalist Soldier to American Citizen (Part 1), 1744-1817 ..... p. 173
- Samuel Gray – Veteran of the American Revolutionary War, 1751-1835 ..... p. 245

Kyla Bayang

- Introducing My Revolutionary War Patriot, Elisha Richards: A Journey to Understanding the Battle and Massacre of Wyoming, PA, 1735-1778 ..... p. 123

Linda Stufflebean

- John Adams & the American Revolution: The Other Side of the Story, 1740-1819 ..... p. 149
- The Revolutionary War Experience of John Stufflebean: Probably Not What He Expected! 1756-1844 ..... p. 275
- Revolutionary War Soldier Joses Bucknam: Another Unexpected Military Experience, 1760-1835 ..... p. 383

Lori Olson White

- Azubah Freeman Ryder: Front Row to the Republic, Pt. 1, 1784-1888 ... p. 511
- Azubah Freeman Ryder: Front Row to the Republic, Pt. 2, 1784-1888 ... p. 519

Dr. Mary Marshall

- Springfield Baptist Church, 1774-1787 ..... p. 427

Maureen Taylor

- George Fishley, 1760-1851 ..... p. 373
- James Allen Jr., 1762-1867 ..... p. 389
- Tracking Down the Revolutionary War Generation, 1776-1783 ..... p. 453

Randy Seaver

- When Norman Seaver Returned Home After Lexington, 1734-1784 ..... p. 95

Rick Leonard

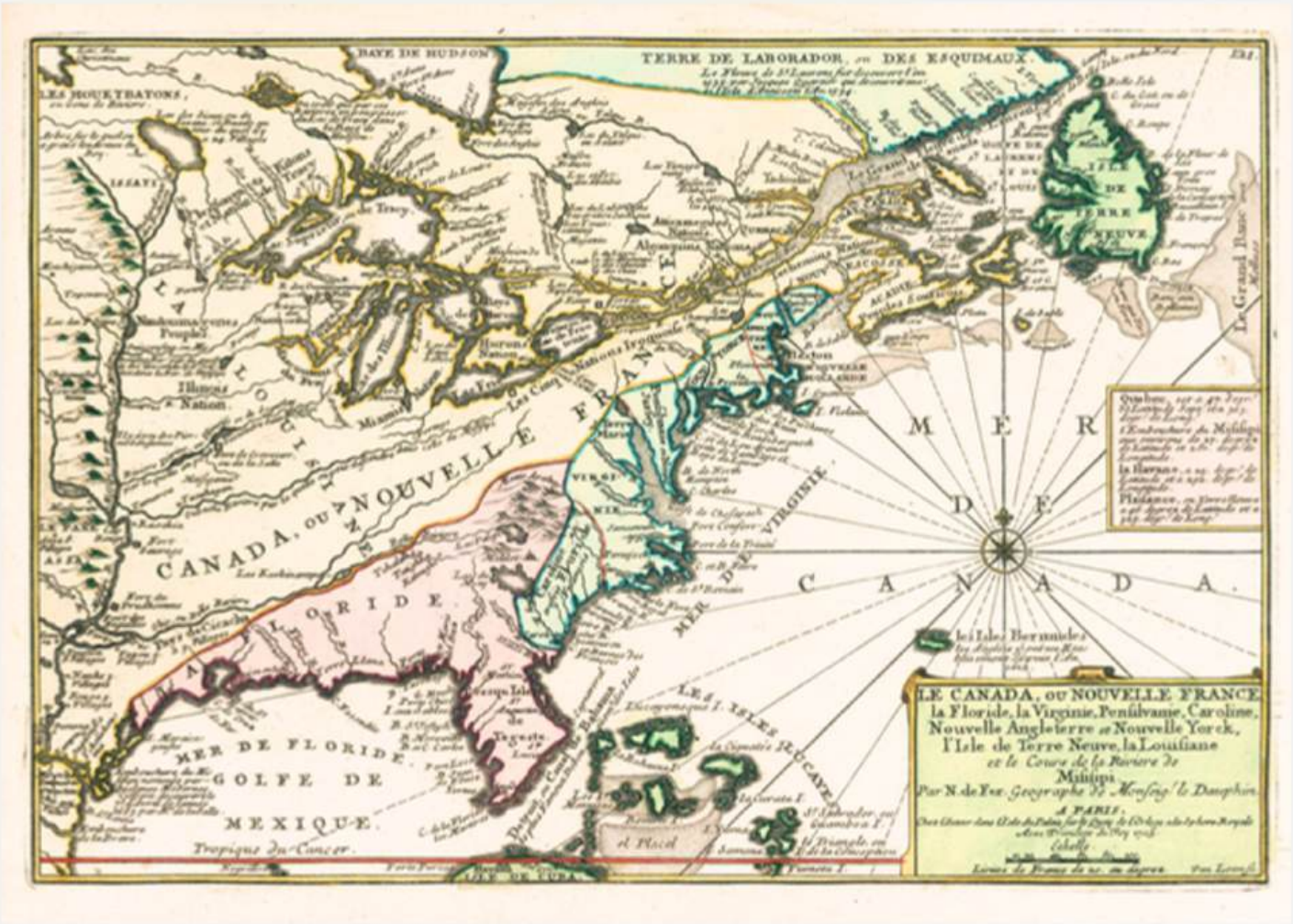
- Patriotic Service in the Revolutionary War, 1777-1777 ..... p. 461

Rita McConnell

- Who Do You Think You Are?, 1781-1782 ..... p. 503

Tad Callin

- Orphan Boy, Continental Officer, Landed Gentry: James McCullough Sr., 1756-1844 ..... p. 307
- Lives and Fortunes: Three Revolutionary War Americans, 1777-1781 ..... p. 465


BAYE DE HUDSON
TERRE DE LABORADOR, ou DES ESQUIMAUX
LES HOUETBATONS,
CANADA, OU NOUVELLE FRANCE
MER DE FLORIDE
GOLFE DE MEXIQUE.
Tropique du Cancer.
MER DU NORD
MER DE VIRGINIE
M E R
D E
C A N A D A.
LE CANADA, ou NOUVELLE FRANCE,
la Floride, la Virginie, Pensilvanie, Caroline,
Nouvelle Angleterre et Nouvelle Yorck,
l'Isle de Terre Neuve, la Louisiane
et le Cours de la Riviere de
Mississipi
Par N. de Fer Geographe de Monseig.r le Dauphin.
A PARIS,

"Le Canada, ou Nouvelle France," *authored by Nicolas de Fer in 1705 and is part of an atlas published around 1717. Learn more at https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~288870~90060402:Le-Canada,-ou-Nouvelle-France-*

Credit: *David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries*

DIANE BURLEY

Author, journalist, mom of two sons. I braid lost moments of history, what has us wincing, and personal experience to offer stories with heart, hope, and humor — because God knows we need all three. I'm always looking for the light..

Diane blogs at "Musings of a Storyteller" at https://dianeburley.substack.com

SCAN ME

SCAN ME

1661–1748

WAIT, STILL: FAITH, FIRE, AND THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

From the Mayflower to a burning frontier town, this is the story of my 7th great grandmother — and what her name still means today.

Her name was not one but two commands, and her birthdate took my breath away. She is the link between three different generations of women, all different religious denominations, and she helps shed a light on what is happening today.

Disgusted with the Church of England's corruption, vestiges of the Catholic papacy, and intrusion into their beliefs, radical Protestant separatists were forced to leave England for Holland under threat of

sedition charges. They weren't wealthy but they were rich with their faith. For a while they were safe in their adopted town of Leiden, however, after a treaty between Holland and England, they once again felt threatened, and decided to embark on a voyage to a new land.

Two ships were to sail to the new world, but one was not seaworthy. Another 20 people from that ship crowded onto the Mayflower, which was a mix of devout believers, crew and "others." John Alden was part of the crew and a skilled barrel maker. The Mullins family were believers – and filled with hope.

Later, William Bradford, Governor of the Plymouth Bay Colony, wrote in Of Plymouth Plantation, that their departure from Leiden was like the children of Israel leaving Egypt — leaving a place of bondage, crossing waters, heading toward a promised land they could not yet see.

When the Mayflower arrived in Plymouth in late fall of 1620, the situation was anything but hopeful. While there was only one fatality in transit, they weren't prepared for the harshness of a New England winter. They had consumed nearly all their provisions. Weakened by hunger, Priscilla Mullins lost her mother, father, and younger brother. By Spring, nearly half of the 102 settlers succumbed to death.

When the Mayflower arrived in Plymouth in late fall of 1620, the situation was anything but hopeful.

And there would have been more, if it weren't for the kindness of the Wampanoag tribe led by its great sachem, Massasoit. A peaceful leader, he shared food, taught them to plant, and believed coexistence was possible.

And it was reciprocated. There is evidence of genuine fondness between Massasoit and the leaders of the Plymouth Bay colonists led by Bradford, Edward Winslow and Miles Standish.

When the great sachem was gravely ill, Winslow nursed him back to health. Massasoit was grateful:

> *"the English are my friends and love me ... whilst I live I will never forget this kindness they have showed me."*

When he learned of a pending attack by warriors from the Massachusetts tribe, Massasoit warned the Plymouth Colony settlers in time.

Through Massasoit's generosity and their own tenacity, my ninth great grandparents, John Alden and Priscilla Mullins Alden survived. They married and had 10 children, with their third son Joseph being an ascendent.

Wait, still...

The next large voyage from England was in 1630 when 700 new settlers landed to create a Christian city. But these weren't Pilgrims – they were Puritans, looking to purify the Church of England from of any remnants of the papacy. They viewed the Pilgrims as reckless and unmoored. With such a large contingency, they established a foothold in what is now Boston, they formed the Massachusetts Bay Company.

They were far wealthier and didn't believe in a centralized faith structure which the Church of England (and Catholic Church) demanded. As such, they believed strongly in literacy so everyone could read the bible and established America's first public school system.

In 1647, a law required towns of 50 families to establish schools – for free as part of a civic obligation.

While there were many benefits from the treaties forged between Massasoit and the Pilgrims, they didn't feel any need to adhere to them. They pushed west into indigenous areas until settling in Lancaster, which was authorized and governed under the same Puritan charter. The town was incorporated in 1653, and run as a theocracy; the civic and the church being one. Any member of the town, was a member of the church.

One of those who signed the covenant was Roger Sumner, who established the first Church of Lancaster. Roger and his wife Mary (Joslin) lived adjacent to her family's land. On Dec 10, 1661, a baby girl was born.

A convention at the time was to compress pieces of scripture to create a virtue name. Perhaps inspired by Psalm 37:7 1

> *"Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him"*

And Psalm 46:10

> *"Be still and know that I am God"*

They named my seventh great grandmother, Waitstill.

Was he foreshadowing patience under injustice and stillness in catastrophe? And for whom was he foreshadowing?

There is a footnote in the Geneva bible:

> *"He warneth them that persecute the Church, to cease their cruelty: for else they shall feel that God is too strong for them against whom they fight."*

Who is the warning to? Is this a backward stab at the Anglicans who had driven them from England?

Wait, still...

After 40 years of peace, the Wampanoag endured devastating consequences from their alliances with the English. They saw their lands confiscated, agreements broken, English sovereignty imposed. After Massasoit's death, the eldest son was captured by the English, and died. His second son, Metacom, vowed revenge for his brother's death.

Metacom, who had been given the English name, Philip, voiced his grievance to the Governor of Rhode Island, stating that a half century of English cheating, discrimination, and pressures to sell land, submit to Plymouth colony's authority, convert to Christianity, and consume alcohol had brought them to the brink of war.

One generation's kindness was followed by another generation's betrayal. Not surprisingly, the tribe was angry.

Another tribe impacted by English settlers was the Nashaway. From all accounts they coexisted peacefully with the settlers even as roads were built through the territory. In a report about the indigenous people, with what I perceive as both a tinge of guilt and rationalization, General Daniel Gookin wrote;2

> *"These have been a great people in former times but of late years have been consumed by the Maquas wars and other ways; and are not above fifteen or sixteen families."*

At their peak, the Nashaways numbered in the thousands. The 1633 smallpox epidemic alone killed hundreds. By 1674 the number that remained was 60-80 people total.

The town of Lancaster was the home of 50 families. Garrisons ringed the town to offer protections from raids. Waitstill's cousin Abraham, a military man, was there to protect the town. His wife Ann and toddler Beatrice were there as well.

On the morning of February 10, 1676, more than 400 warriors: Narragansett, Wampanoag, and Nipmuc, in addition to the few remaining Nashaways, attacked. They were unmerciful – bludgeoning victims, crushing their skulls, and burning everything in their paths. A minister's wife, Mary Rowlandson, and her six year-old daughter were both wounded. Captured, and forced to walk for miles without food except berries and raw, slain animals, Mary carried Sarah for almost two weeks until the child succumbed in her arms.

Mary was freed after three months in captivity and wrote bitterly about the experience.

> *"I have seen the extreme vanity of this World: One hour I have been in health, and wealth, wanting nothing: But the next hour in sickness and wounds, and death, having nothing but sorrow and affliction."3*

She referred to her tormentors as "those black creatures in the night," "heathens," demons."

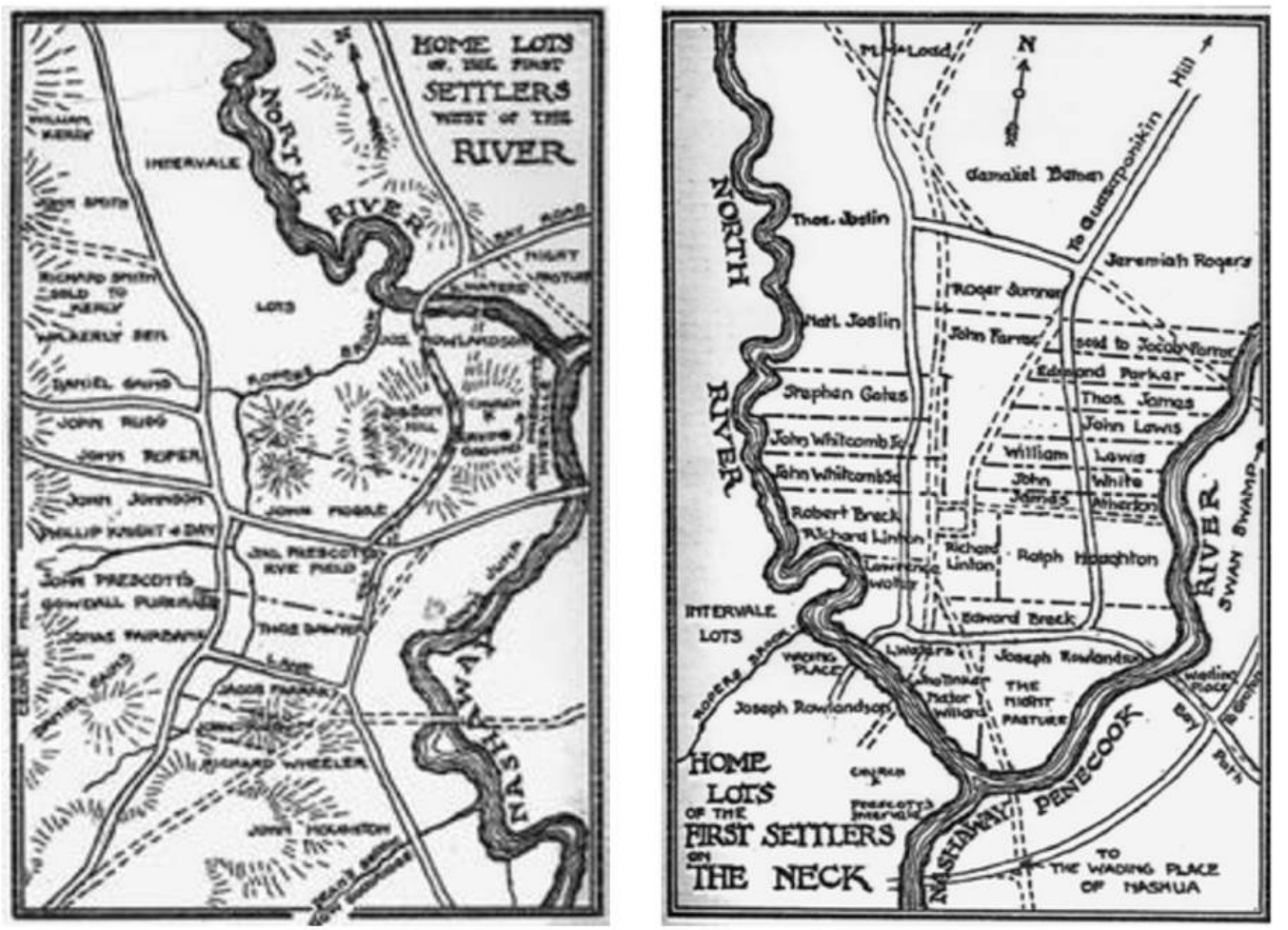
Waitstill's cousin Abraham was killed – and his wife and child kidnapped. Like Mary, they were marched west through the wilderness to evade the colonial militias. Unable to keep up, Ann and Beatrice succumbed. Another cousin was saved by friendly indigenous.

What wasn't burned was abandoned. Lancaster was gone.

Wait, still...

The Sumner family is not listed in the many books and memoirs as being among the captured or killed.4 Still, with the destruction of the entire town confirmed, they too lost everything. Did Roger have an inkling about the raid, and move his family from Lancaster out of caution?

Prior to living in Lancaster, Roger was the deacon of a Church in his parents adopted hometown of Dorchester. He married Mary Joslyn, and their first two children were born there. When Mary's father, Thomas Joslyn, died in 1660, Mary and her siblings were each willed portions of land. Having an opportunity to start a new church, and homestead, the Sumners moved to Lancaster.



Map of the settlement in Lancaster. The Sumner family was just north of the Rowlandsons. Mary's husband had gone off the night before to seek reinforcements.

Roger took an active role – signing the town covenant, becoming a road commissioner, being an elected official – and Deacon of the First Church of Lancaster. In essence, Roger was at the center of the town's civic, religious, and administrative life. Deacon, arbitrator, road commissioner, covenant signer.

Where then was he when the town was in peril?

While it is possible that he heard rumors of attacks and decided to leave fortuitously, I think there might be another explanation. Records show that Roger's mother died in June of 1676. Perhaps he took his family, now numbering 7 children, to Dorchester just prior to the raid, to visit his ailing mother.

Indeed, an eighth child, a son, Ebenezer, was born there in 1678. Ebenezer means "stone of help" in Hebrew.

From 1 Samuel 7:12 — after the Israelites defeated the Philistines, Samuel took a stone and set it up saying:

> *"Hitherto hath the LORD helped us."*

Was this his way of thanking the Lord for his intercession?

Wait, still...

Waitstill was Roger and Mary's first child born in Lancaster. They gave her a name that means both patience and wait for the Lord to help. It seemed prescient. She was 14 when Indians raided her town – and somehow, she and her family were safe.

Called to her faith, she married another deacon, Manassah Tucker, and raised 9 children, including a daughter named Waitstill and a son named Ebenezer. Her youngest was Benjamin, a Hebrew name meaning "son of my right hand." He is my 6th great grandfather and he had a son by the same name. Benjamin Jr. was 10 when his grandmother died.

Benjamin Tucker's son, Woodward, married Lucy Durkee – who at the age of 14, ran into the woods alongside her mother to survive an Indian raid. A raid by the Abenaki that was orchestrated by the British in a desperate attempt to maintain power over subjects who no longer had any allegiance to them.

What do I make of all this?

I couldn't ignore the coincidences: two 14-year-olds, a century apart, survived Indian raids and the burning of their towns; and Waitstill, such a unique name, sharing a birth date with my Mom. December 10th also marks the death of Mom's father, and her sister Ann. All of them Irish Catholic.

The type of people my ancestors might have wanted purged.

It's human nature to want to see villains and heroes. But I can't. They are my blood; a chain of humans of different faiths who, in their desire for religious freedom and agency, sometimes impinged on the rights of others.

It's a story that rhymes with today.

"God has yet more light and truth to break forth from his holy word."

FOOTNOTES

1. *Geneva Bible of 1599.*
2. *Many of the facts and quotations from folks The early records of Lancaster, Massachusetts. 1643-1725 (https://archive.org/details/earlyrecordsofla1643lanc).*
3. *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson (https://www.gutenberg.org/files/851/851-h/851-h.htm).*
4. *Op.cit. The early records of Lancaster, Massachusetts. 1643-1725. (https://archive.org/details/earlyrecordsofla1643lanc)*

This article was originally published at https://dianeburley.substack.com/p/priscilla-alden-descendents

Copyright 2026 Diane Burley

ANNE YOUNG

Anne blogs from both her WordPress site at https://AnneYoungAU.WordPress.com, as well as https://AnneYoungAU.substack.com. The QR code takes you to her Substack profile, which includes a link to her WordPress site

SCAN ME

1700–1772

GEORGE III: MY PART IN HIS DOWNFALL

As we approach the 250th anniversary of Independence Day in the United States I am proud to say that I have a family connection to the events it celebrates.

My eighth great grandfather Richard Dana, born in England – quite possibly in Manchester – in 1617, crossed the Atlantic about 1640 and settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Around 1648 he married an American girl named Anne Bullard (1626 – 1711), who was born in Massachusetts. Between 1649 and 1670 they had eleven children. I am descended from Richard's son Daniel (1663 – 1749) and grandson Richard (1700 – 1772).

My sixth great grandfather Richard Dana appears to have been the first of the family to graduate from a university – Harvard. He became a notable lawyer and politician, a magistrate, and a leading figure in the agitation against British imperial government. He was a founding member the Sons of Liberty, and led Massachusetts opposition to the Stamp Act of 1765.

I have written several times about Richard's oldest son, my 5th great grandfather Edmund Dana (1739 – 1823). As a young man he travelled to Edinburgh to study. He married in Edinburgh in 1765 and became a clergyman in England with the support of his wife's family. He did not return to America

On July 4, 1776, the 13 American colonies claimed independence from England, an event which eventually led to the formation of the United States. Each year on Independence Day, the fourth of July

The Bloody Massacre perpetuated in King Street
Butcher's Hall
Engrav'd Printed & Sold by Paul Revere
Unhappy Boston! see thy Sons deplore,
Thy hallow'd Walks besmear'd with guiltless Gore:
While faithless P—n and his savage Bands,
With murd'rous Rancour stretch their bloody Hands;
Like fierce Barbarians grinning o'er their Prey,
Approve the Carnage and enjoy the Day.
If scalding drops from Rage from Anguish Wrung
If speechless Sorrows lab'ring for a Tongue
Or if a weeping World can aught appease
The plaintive Ghosts of Victims such as these:
The Patriot's copious Tears for each are shed,
A glorious Tribute which embalms the Dead.
But know Eternal Vengeance waits to that awful Goal:
Where JUSTICE strips the Murd'rer of his Soul:
Should venal C—ts the scandal of the Land,
Snatch the relentless Villain from her Hand,
Keen Execrations on this Plate inscribe,
Shall reach a JUDGE who never can be bribed.
The unhappy Sufferers were Mess.rs Sam.l Gray Sam.l Maverick Jas. Caldwell Crispus Attucks & Pat.k Carr
Killed Six wounded; two of them (Chrisp.s Monk & John Clark) Mortally
Published in 1770 by Paul Revere

The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt. Engraving by Paul Revere. Image retrieved from Wikimedia Commons. Richard Dana served as a member of the committee that investigated the Boston Massacre in 1770.

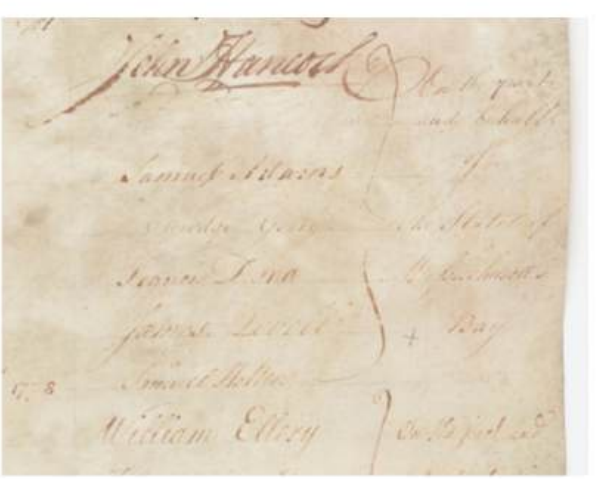
Americans celebrate this historic event. Edmund Dana's brother Francis (1743-1811) has a prominent place in this period of American history. In 1773 he married Elizabeth (1751 – 1807), daughter of William Ellery, who became one of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Francis Dana became a leading lawyer and a close associate of George Washington. In 1775 the Continental Congress sent Francis Dana to England in an unsuccessful attempt to reconcile the differences leading to the Revolutionary War. He returned the following year and reported to General Washington that a friendly

John Trumbull's 1819 painting, Declaration of Independence, depicting the five-man drafting committee presenting the Declaration of Independence to Congress. Image retrieved from Wikimedia Commons. Among those depicted is William Ellery. The image can be found on the back of the U.S. $2 bill designed in 1976. The original painting hangs in the US Capitol rotunda.

settlement of the dispute was impossible. Dana's opinion helped influence the adoption of the 1776 Declaration of Independence. He was elected a delegate to the Second Continental Congress on 10 December 1776, where he signed the Articles of Confederation in 1778. He was sent as Ambassador to Russia in 1780. The future President John Quincy Adams served as his secretary. Again a member of Congress in 1784 and a leader of the Federalist Party, Francis Dana later joined the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, where he served as Chief Justice from 1791 to 1806.

*Some of the signatures on the Articles of Confederation including **Francis Dana** who was one of six who signed on behalf of Massachusetts Bay and Francis's father in law **William Ellery** who was one of three who signed on behalf of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. **John Hancock** also signed on behalf of Massachusetts; Hancock is remembered for his large and stylish signature on the United States Declaration of Independence, so much so that the term "John Hancock" has become a synonym in the United States for signature.*



NOTES & SOURCE

- *Title with apologies to Spike Milligan.*
- *Dana, Elizabeth Ellery (1956). The Dana Family in America. Wright & Potter Printing Company, 32 Derne Street, Boston*

INDIVIDUALS & RELATIONSHIPS

1. *Anne is the daughter of Rafe Champion de Crespigny.*
2. *Rafe is the son of Richard Geoffrey Champion de Crespigny OBE (1907-1966).*
3. *Richard is the son of Constantine Trent Champion de Crespigny (1882-1952).*
4. *Constantine is the son of Philip Champion de Crespigny (1850-1927).*
5. *Philip is the son of Charlotte Frances (Dana) Champion Crespigny (1820-1904).*
6. *Charlotte is the daughter of William Pulteney Dana (1776-1861).*
7. *William is the son of Edmund Dana (1739-1823).*
8. *Edmund is the son of Richard Dana (1700-1772) and brother of Francis Dana (1743-1811), my 5th great granduncle.*
9. *Richard is the son of Daniel Dana (1663-1749).*
10. *Daniel is the son of Richard Dana (bef.1617-1690).*
11. *This makes Richard the eighth great grandfather of Anne Young.*

Article shared from https://anneyoungau.substack.com/p/george-iii-my-part-in-his-downfall

Copyright 2026 Anne Young

BILL MOORE

1704–1793

MY MOORE FAMILY IN AMERICA

Bill blogs from both his Substack publication at https://BillMooreNY.substack.com and his WeAre Archive. The QR code takes you to his Substack profile which includes both sites.

SCAN ME

At the time of his father's death, Thomas Moore (1704-1793) was the only sibling of age. He, along with his mother, received the largest share of Gershom's estate. The younger children received small cash bequests. It's assumed they were beneficiaries of their mother's will when she passed.

As the eldest male in the family, Thomas would have been under some pressure to marry soon and start a family. He did marry Esther Philips soon after his father's death. We don't have a record of their wedding, but based on the birth of their first child, Gershom, in 1725, it can be inferred that they likely married in 1724.

Thomas Moore of Maidenhead, Hunterdon County, New Jersey

I have not been able to find good sourcing for a birth or death date for Esther. Many online trees confuse her with Esther Moore Hayden, providing a date of death of 2 November 1747. We know this is incorrect because she served as an executor of Gershom's will.

In addition to Gershom, Thomas and Esther welcomed four other children into the world: Philip in 1726, Mersey in 1728, Elizabeth in 1730, and John in 1732.

It appears that Thomas built upon his inheritance. His will refers to a "negro girl" as part of Esther's bequest. This, and his reference to his farm as a "plantation," would seem to imply that it was a large agricultural estate that probably had various outbuildings in addition to the family's home. It seems clear that his family enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle.

Image created by ChatGPT

Thomas prepared his will on 27 December 1781. It was not presented for probate until 28 March 1793, indicating that his death would have occurred in the days or weeks prior. The bequests in his will were:
To his wife, Esther, an unnamed negro girl during her widowhood; afterward she would pass to Philip, John, Elizabeth, and Mersey Moore, each holding an equal share.

To his son, Gershom, £10. (Gershom had married and moved to Burlington County, New Jersey, by this time, so he did not share in the property in Maidenhead.)

To his sons, Philip and John, the plantation and movable estate. Philip received 2 shares to John's one.

Executors were to be Esther, Philip, and John Moore. The will was witnessed by Nathan Moore, Philip Roberts, and Benjamin Slack.

NOTES

- *Hutchinson, Elmer T., editor, Documents Relating to the Colonial, Revolutionary, and Post-Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey, First Series — Vol. XXXVII, "Calendar of New Jersey Wills, Administrations, Etc., Volume VIII—1791-1795, (Jersey City, New Jersey: Scott Printing Company for The New Jersey Historical Society: 1942). Image by Ancestry.com.(www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/203657777/person/312665434139/facts)*

Article shared from https://billmooreny.substack.com/p/my-moore-family-in-america-part-7

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Bill Moore

1714–1789

THE ORIGINAL GRANTEES OF CAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

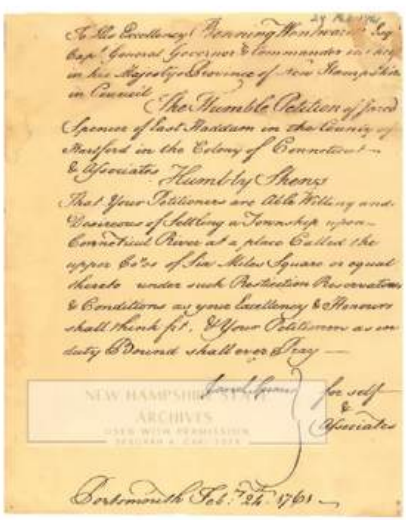
Deborah blogs from https://YourFamilyQuest.com and her Substack publication of the same name. She also edits the Tips blog for https://MissionGenealogy.org.

I was going to write the story of Dr. Joseph Spencer and his half-brother, Nehemiah Spencer, but their story starts here with their uncle, Jared Spencer, and their father, General Joseph Spencer.

On 5 January 1767, King George the Third, under the advice of the New Hampshire governor, Benning Wentworth, issued a charter for a "New Plantation" containing about twenty-five thousand acres "Beginning at the n. Westerly Corner of Holderness at a red Oak tree on the bank of the River from thence running East six miles to the N: E. Corner of Holderness from thence running North Five miles from thence West about 4 ½ miles to Pemigiwasset River, from thence a strait Line Westerly to the N: E. Corner of Rumney from thence on a running Line S° 30 D^{s} West to the south Easterly Corner thereof, which is also the N: Easterly Corner of Cockermouth from thence Easterly on a Streight Line to the N: Westerly Corner of Holderness the bounds first mention'd..."[1]

But there were conditions. The land was to be divided into seventy equal shares and each grantee had to "Plant & Cultivate Five Acres of Land, with the Term of five Years for every Fifty Acres Contained in his or their Share...and continue to Improve and Settle the Same by additional Cultivations on Penalty of the Forfeiture of his Grant..." Also, the grantees needed a special permit to cut down pine trees as they were reserved for "Masting our Royal Navy," and besides the cultivation acres, each grantee was allotted a one-acre lot in town.[2]

SCAN ME



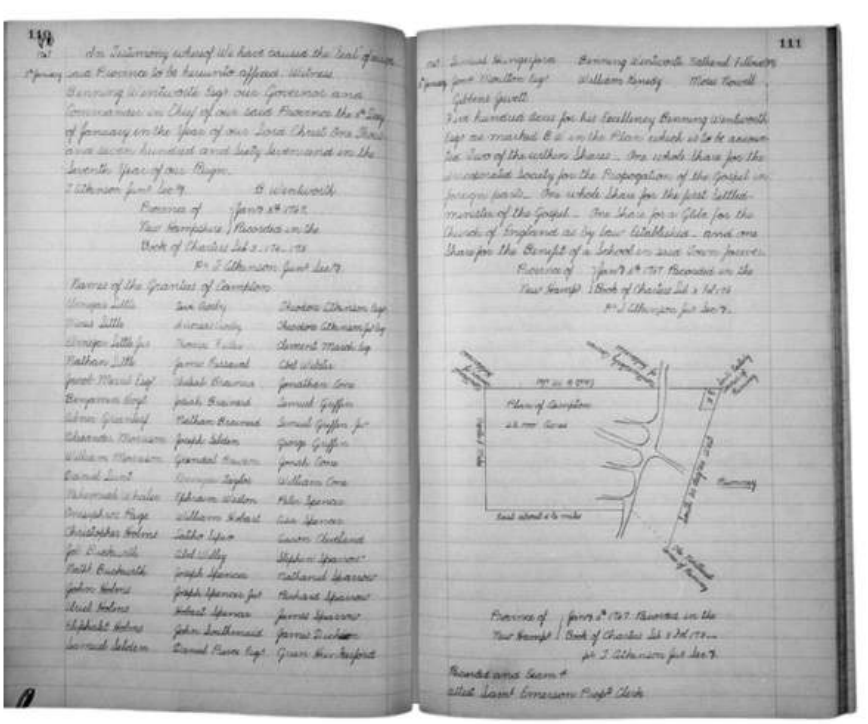
Petition of Jared Spencer to Governor Benning Wentworth.

For these privileges, the grantees were required to pay "the Rent of one Ear of Indian Corn" annually for ten years. After ten years, they were required to pay the Crown one shilling for every hundred acres they owned.3

While the land was covered with trees and not ready for cultivation, sixty-four men paid to be part of the original grant. They also set aside five hundred acres for Governor Benning Wentworth, which included two shares for "the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts," one share for "the first Settled Minister of the Gospel," one share for "a Glebe for the Church of England," and one share for the school.4

Jared Spencer of East Haddam, Connecticut, sent a petition to the New Hampshire governor in 1761. He died before the grant was issued in 1767. While he was not one of the original grantees, his brother Joseph Spencer, Joseph's sons Joseph Jr. and Hobart, his first cousin Peter Spencer, and Peter's son Asa Spencer, were.5

Hobart and Joseph Spencer Jr. arrived in 1766 with Abel Willey, the seventeen-year-old son of the widow Mary (Holmes) Willey. Their father probably came earlier, but while he built a house large enough for the Proprietors' meetings (this could refer to the inn he built in 1764), and was a partner with Moses Little in building a sawmill, Col.



Names of the Grantees of Campton, New Hampshire, and a rough map of the area granted to them.

Joseph Spencer was also active in the politics of Connecticut and probably did not spend much time in Campton.6

In 1750, Col. Joseph Spencer was appointed Deputy from East Haddam to the Legislature and served for fourteen years. He was also a Judge of the Probate for the District of East Haddam from 1753 until his death. He joined in all military actions involving Connecticut from King George's War in 1746 to about 1780. He enlisted in the Seven Years' War, serving from 1757, and he continued to serve after the war until 1766. From 1766 to 1780, he served as the assistant to the Deputy Governor. In 1776, Col. Joseph Spencer was promoted to Major-General of the Continental Army and commanded two of the Connecticut Brigades. After the war, he was appointed as a delegate to the Congress, and in 1780, he was elected to the Connecticut State Council, where he served until he died in 1789.7

The Colonel Spencer Inn, built in 1764, photo by Deborah A. Carl.

The deeds have two Joseph Spencers selling land in Campton around the same time – one who lived in Campton and the other who lived in East Haddam. On the deed to Asa Spooner dated 14 February 1769, General Joseph Spencer appeared before Timothy Gates, Justice of the Peace in East Haddam, Hartford County, Connecticut, to acknowledge that the sale of the land in Campton was his free act and deed.8

So while Col. Joseph Spencer continued to make East Haddam his permanent residence, his sons Joseph and Hobart made Campton their home but appear to have left in the 1780s. Hobart moved to neighboring

Rumney before moving to Thornton and then across the river to Vermont. Joseph Jr. moved to Hoosick, Rensselaer, New York, where he practiced medicine before moving to Virginia and purchasing land in what is now known as Vienna, Cook, West Virginia.9

Peter Spencer sold most of his Rights in Campton before the land was divided, but his son Asa bought and pitched Aaron Cleveland's Right on 25 June 1770. Asa sold his own Right, which was pitched by Samuel Holms on behalf of John Holms on 24 October 1770.

Of the five original Spencer Grantees (all of East Haddam, Connecticut), Col. Joseph Spencer and Peter Spencer probably did not live in the town, Joseph Spencer Jr. and Hobart Spencer lived in the town about ten or fifteen years, and Asa Spencer resided in the town until he died in 1778 while serving in the Revolutionary War.10

While the land was covered with trees and not ready for cultivation, sixty-four men paid to be part of the original grant.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records Vol. 1, 1767-1826, 1–2, Decree by George, The Third, granting permission to settle a "New Plantation" in New Hampshire and outlining the location and conditions of the grant, dated 5 January 1767; FamilySearch.*

2. *Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records Vol. 1, 1767-1826, 3, Conditions attached to the land grant; FamilySearch.*

3. *Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records Vol. 1, 1767-1826, 3–4, Conditions attached to the land grant; FamilySearch.*

4. *Rev. Isaac Willey, "The Early History of Campton," in Proceedings at the Centennial Celebration of the Town of Campton, New Hampshire, 12 September 1867 (©1868), 13; FamilySearch. Also, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records Vol. 1, 1767-1826, 110–111The Grant required land to be set aside for religious purposes, a school, and for Benning Wentworth; FamilySearch.*

5. *Petition of Jared Spencer to Governor Benning Wentworth dated 24 February 1861; digital copy provided by Office of the New Hampshire Secretary of State, Division of Archives & Records Management, Concord. Also, Colchester, New London, Connecticut, Probate Records Vol. 3, 1769–1771, 162, letters of administration were granted regarding the estate of Capt. Jared Spencer, late of East Haddam, dated 2 August 1762; FamilySearch. And, Connecticut, transcription of Militia War Records, 2nd Series, Vol. 1, A–L, 1747–1788, 141, Maj. Joseph Spencer's orders & election return of 16th co. 12th reg't, occasioned by the death of Jared Spencer, Oct. 1762; FamilySearch. And, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records Vol. 1, 5, The Grant required land to be set aside for religious purposes, a school, and for Benning Wentworth; FamilySearch.*

6. *Rev. Isaac Willey, "The Early History of Campton," in Proceedings at the Centennial Celebration of the Town of Campton, New Hampshire, 12 September 1867 (©1868), 13; FamilySearch. Also, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records Vol. 1, 1767-1826, 6, the first Proprietors Meeting was scheduled to be held at the "House of Col. Joseph Spencer's in Said Campton..." on 2 November 1769; FamilySearch. And, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records Vol. 1, 1767-1826, 11-12, it was voted that Lot No. 7 in the first division be granted to Col. Joseph Spencer and Mr. Moses Little "in Consideration of the Expence they have been at in building a Saw Mill in said Campton" at the Proprietor's Meeting held at the house of Col. Joseph Spencer in Campton on 14 May 1770; FamilySearch.*

7. *Charles Barney Whittelsey, Historical Sketch of Joseph Spencer, Major-General of the Continental Troops, Member of the Council of Safety, Congressman, Judge, Deputy, Deacon, and Farmer, (Hartford: Hartford Press, 1904), 1–3, 5–6; Library of Congress.*

8. *Grafton County, New Hampshire, Deeds Vol. 10, 1787-1788, 48, Joseph Spencer of East Haddam, Hartford, Connecticut, sold land in Campton to Asa Spooner [later in the document he is twice referred to as Asa Spencer] of Campton land that originally belonged to Aaron Cleavland one of the original Grantees, dated 14 February 1769; FamilySearch.*

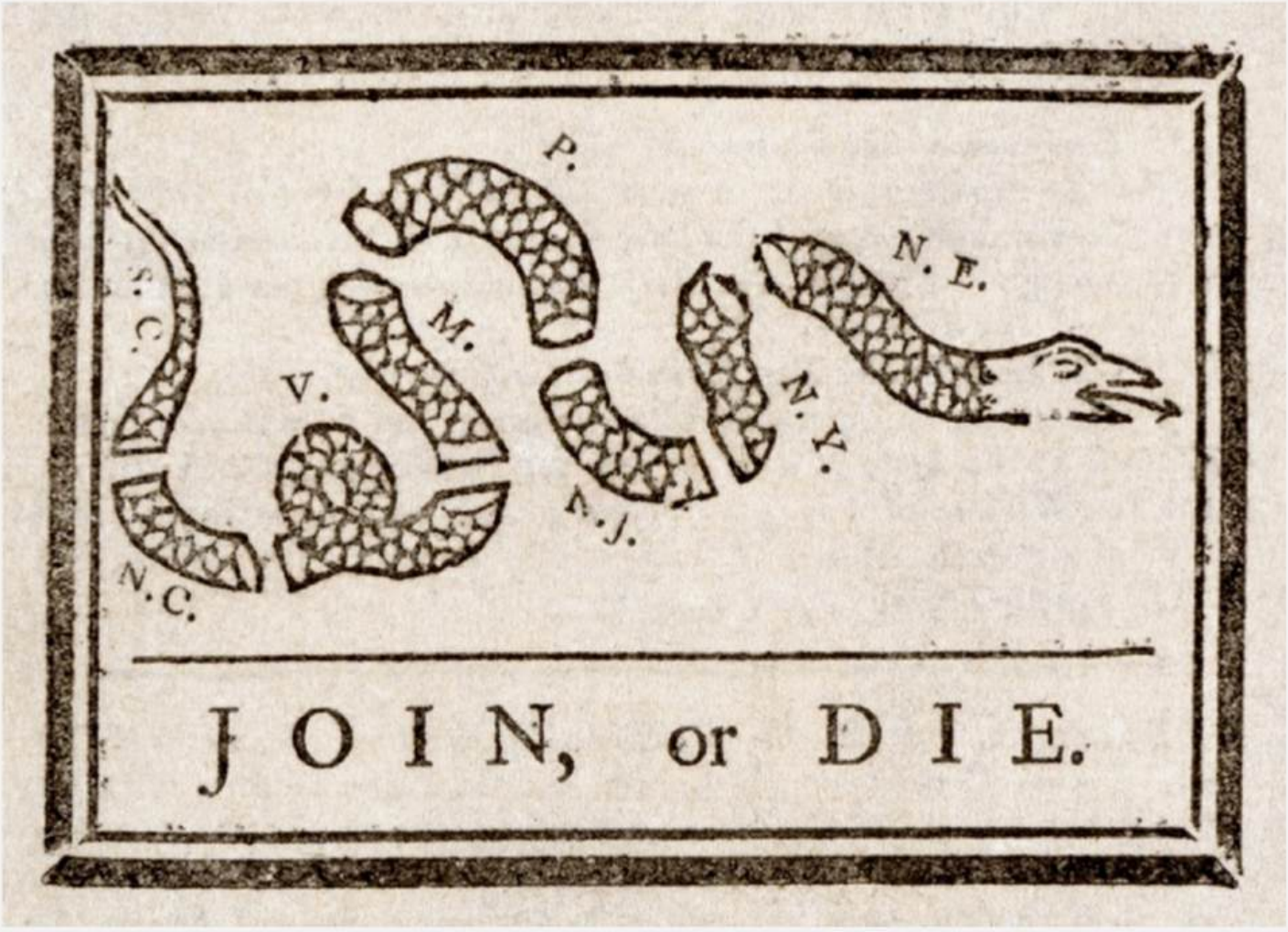
9. *Grafton County, New Hampshire, Deeds Vol. 7, 1783-1784, 272, Hobart Spencer of Rumney, Grafton, New Hampshire, sells land in Campton, pitched to the original right of Jonathan Cone to Jacob Merrill of Plymouth, Grafton, New Hampshire, dated 14 December 1781; FamilySearch. Also, Grafton County, New Hampshire, Deeds Vol. 8, 1784-1786, 277 & 278, Hobart Spencer of Thornton, Grafton, New Hampshire, sells land in Campton, being the original right of Lotiho Sepio to John Nevans of Plymouth, Grafton, New Hampshire, dated 24 April 1786; FamilySearch. And, "Hobart Spencer Jr. Was Most Likely the Husband of Betsey, Hazen," Substack. And, Grafton County, New Hampshire, Deeds Vol. 16, 1791-1792, 273, Joseph Spencer Physician of Hoosick, Rensselaer, New York, sold land in Campton, which was the original right of Joseph and Joseph Jr. Spencer to Moses Little of Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, dated 19 June 1792; FamilySearch. And, Albany County, New York, Deeds Vol. 11, 1785-1788, 243, Samuel Guthrie sells land to Joseph Spencer, physician, both of Hoosick, Albany, New York, on 5 August 1786; FamilySearch. And, "About Vienna, West Virginia," Visit Greater Parkersburg.*

10. *Deborah Carl, "The Original Grantees of Campton, New Hampshire, Part Four - Peter & Asa Spencer and Aaron Cleveland," Substack.*

Article shared from https://yourfamilyquest.substack.com/p/the-original-grantees-of-campton

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Deborah Carl



"Join, or Die," *created by Benjamin Franklin and first published in the Pennsylvania Gazette on May 9, 1754. Described as the world's first editorial cartoon. Learn more at https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/the-story-behind-the-join-or-die-snake-cartoon*

Credit: *United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division under the digital ID cph.3g05315. Public Domain.*

ANNE YOUNG

Sharing my family history. I am Australian with forebears from the United Kingdom and Europe. Anne blogs from https://anneyoungau.wordpress.com and https://anneyoungau.substack.com

SCAN ME

1720–1830

THE LEXINGTON ALARM

My Dana relatives respond to the Lexington Alarm of 19 April 1775

The Battle of Lexington, 19 April 1775, Oil on canvas by William Barns Wollen, 1910. National Army Museum, London. Retrieved through Wikimedia Commons: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Battle_of_Lexington.jpg

On the night of 18 April 1775 British troops under General Thomas Gage marched to Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts to seize colonial military supplies. On 19 April Paul Revere, William Dawes, and others rode through the colonies spreading the alarm. Across New England local patriots and Minutemen were mobilized quickly.

By nightfall about 4,000 Massachusetts militiamen had taken the field, harassing the British column as it retreated toward Boston. Within a week, 15,000 to 20,000 men from Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island surrounded Boston and began a siege.

The alarm demonstrated the effectiveness of the colonial militia system and showed that resistance to Britain extended far beyond Boston, uniting the New England countryside in armed action.

Minutemen and militia

In Massachusetts, all able-bodied men aged 16 to 60 were enrolled in local militia companies, organized by town and regiment. Minutemen trained more frequently and were ready to mobilize quickly.

In the previous years, as the possibility of a war with the British became apparent, the militia trained several times a week.

Participants from the Dana family

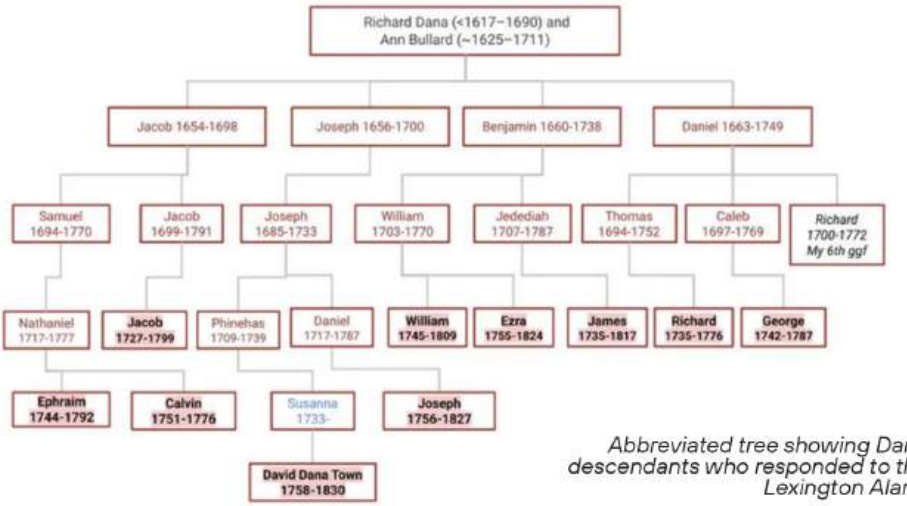
My eighth great grandfather Richard Dana (~1617-1690) arrived in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay sometime before1640. About 1648 he married a fellow immigrant, Ann Bullard. They had eleven children and many great and great grandchildren.

At the time of the American Revolution the Dana family had been living for several generations in the area of New England. At least ten of Richard's descendants responded to the Lexington Alarm, the urgent messages sent after the skirmishes with the British at Lexington and Concord.

In the The Dana Family in America by Elizabeth Ellery Dana and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana (Cambridge, Mass., 1956) the following men were identified as having responded to the Lexington Alarm :

The Lexington Minuteman. Photograph by user Daderot CC BY-SA 3.0 retrieved from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Minute_Man_Statue_Lexington_Massachusetts.jpg

Dana Family Participants in the Lexington Alarm, April 19, 1775



Abbreviated tree showing Dana descendants who responded to the Lexington Alarm

Jacob Dana 1727-1799

- Company / Regiment: Marched from Ashford, Connecticut
- Role on April 19: Served 26 days after the Alarm
- Later Service: —

William Dana 1745-1809

- Company / Regiment: Capt. Timothy Bigelow's Co., Col. Artemas Ward's Regt.
- Role on April 19: Sergeant, marched to Cambridge
- Later Service: Commissioned lieutenant in artillery; served in Siege of Boston; campaigns through 1776

Ezra Dana 1755-1824

- Company / Regiment: Capt. Jeremiah Wiswall's Co. (Newton)
- Role on April 19: Enrolled April 19
- Later Service: Served in Continental Artillery; battles of Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth

Ephraim Dana 1744-1792

- Company / Regiment: Capt. Joseph Morse's Co., Col. Bullard's Regt.
- Role on April 19: Sergeant, served one week
- Later Service: Later first lieutenant, Capt. Hezekiah Broad's Co., 5th Middlesex Regt.

Calvin Dana 1751-1776

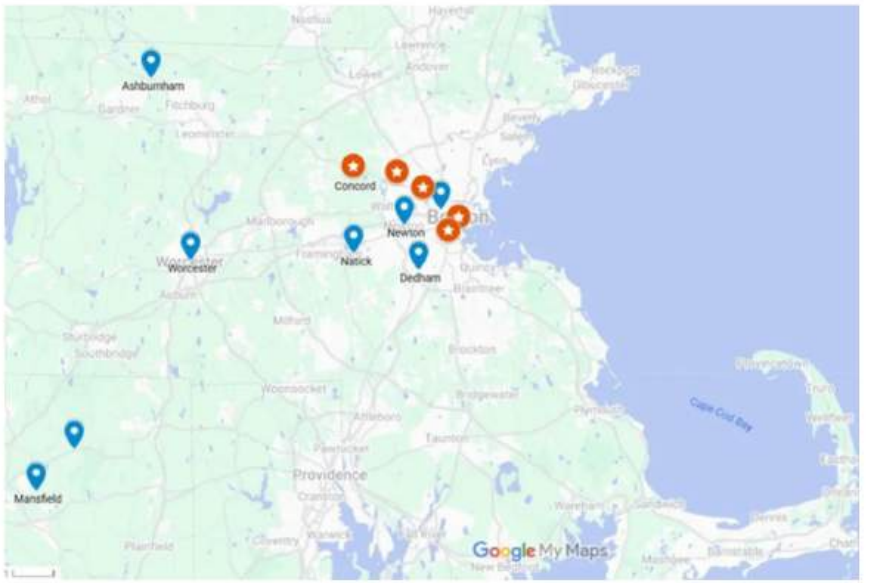
- Company / Regiment: Capt. Aaron Fuller's Co.
- Role on April 19: Private, marched on Alarm
- Later Service: Also served in Capt. Joseph Lewis's Co.; died 1776

Joseph Dana 1756-1827

- Company / Regiment: Capt. Thomas White's Brookline Co.
- Role on April 19: Private, fought near Arlington against Lord Percy's troops
- Later Service: —

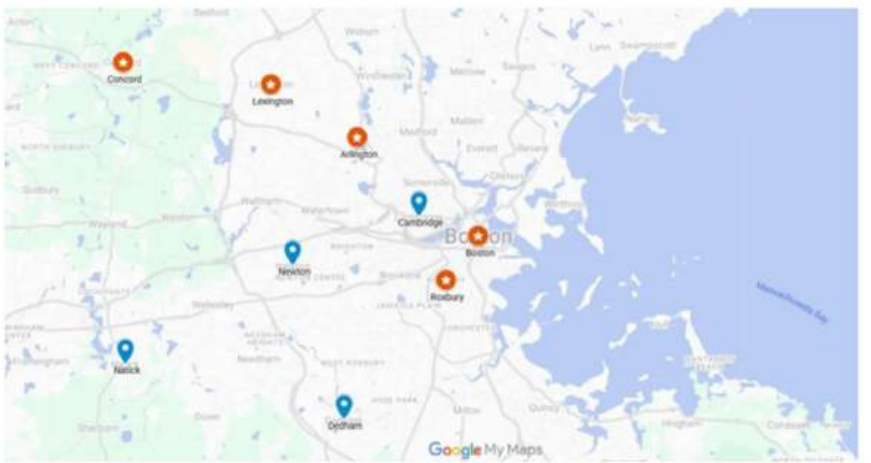
David Dana Town 1758-1830

- Company / Regiment: Capt. John Town's Co. (Roxbury)
- Role on April 19: Private, 6 days' service after Alarm
- Later Service: Later enlisted in Col. Learned's Regt.; long service through 1775



Map showing places associated with members of the Dana family who responded to the Lexington Alarm.

The regional mobilization prompted by the Lexington Alarm brought thousands of men into action within hours. Among them were at least ten descendants of Richard Dana. With this rapid response the militia from across Massachusetts and neighboring colonies, forced the British military forces to retreat from from Concord and Lexington. Within days the British found themselves under siege in Boston.



Map zoomed in to Boston, Concord and Lexington

This post first published at https://anneyoungau.wordpress.com/2025/08/22/the-lexington-alarm/

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Anne Young

RELATED POSTS

- *The American Revolution: my Dana connection: anneyoungau.wordpress.com/2020/07/06/my-dana-connection-to-the-beginning-of-the-american-war-of-independence/*
- *George III: my part in his downfall: anneyoungau.wordpress.com/2020/07/03/george-iii-my-part-in-his-downfall/*

BARBARA TIEN

Barbara is the "ringleader" at Projectkin and is committed to helping more people get their stories told. She writes for both her Substack publications at https://Projectkin.org, and https://MissionGenealogy.org.

SCAN ME

1720–1795

TRUTH, BETSY ROSS, AND THE RABBIT HOLE

of the American Revolution 250 Years Ago

Like many family historians, I was drawn to genealogy by the itch of curiosity. As a child, I was told stories about ancestors, many framed as morality tales. All were said to be true. Over time, I learned that most of these stories had come from a book my grandmother had self-published in the "begats" style typical of vanity publications of an earlier era.

There were no footnotes or citations. Though I expect they exist, I have not found any files, record sheets, or archives. In time, I've come to appreciate her book as a treasure map.1 Some passages were easily validated with certificates and documentation I found online.

Other bits reflected fables and aspirations. The trick is to sort between them. Obligatory statements of goodness wrapped family history into neat packages.

Over time, I've discovered that the book reflected nineteen-fifties sensibilities as perfectly as a mid-century modern dining set. I was getting to know Lois Harger, the maternal grandmother I'd never met. She was lovely.

Lois Harger Parker's self-published book of family history, 1948. Internet Archive: https://archive.org /details/03g9-000e

In this context, I was ready to question many of the stories I'd been told. Surprisingly, online databases, digital archives, and newspaper databases have validated the broad strokes of my grandmother's narrative. Eight or more of our ancestors immigrated to this country in the early to mid-seventeenth century. We have straightforward connections to a dozen or more Revolutionary War veterans. They were in the right place at the right time.

Looking at these men, women, and their families: what did they do during the war? What were their stories?

In one of my first forays into research, I debunked a myth that virtually every one of my cousins had been told as a child:

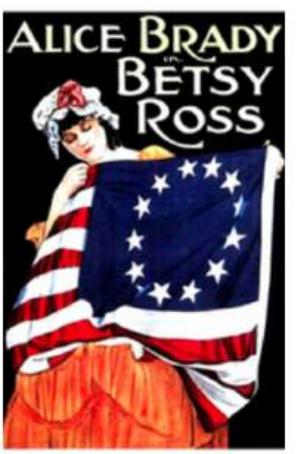
- ***"We are descended from Betsy Ross."***

Except that's not true, nor could it be.

First, modern historians have debunked the legend of Betsy stitching the American flag. Further, our connection to the story breaks down faster than an ice cube in July.

Betsy Griscom (1752-1836) was a real person. She was a Ross because her first husband, John Ross (1752-1776), was killed in a gunpowder explosion in an ammunition dump before the marriage produced any children. (If Wikipedia is to be believed, anyway.)

But there's more. Her John Ross wasn't our John Ross. Many Scotsmen immigrated to America before the Revolutionary War. The John Ross that Betsy married wasn't one of our ancestors. Our guy was about 100 years older and the son of a different George Ross. Our John Ross (1660-1702) was the son of "a" George Ross (1629-1709), just not a nephew to "the" Col. George Ross (1730-1779), delegate from Pennsylvania to Congress, and signer of both the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Association.



Poster for the American film Betsy Ross (1917) with Alice Brady in the lead.

Our George, a Scotsman, was captured in the Battle of Dunbar and brought to America as a prisoner of Cromwell's forces in or around 1650. His son, John, had been gone for fifty years by the time Betsy was born. Interestingly, our John was also the grandfather and great-grandfather of two men who did fight in the Revolutionary War: David Ross (1720-1795) and Ezekiel Ross (1756-1845).

The Other Ross: David Ross (1720-1795)

Who were these rebels? What motivated them to fight in the American Revolution? What did they actually do? My sixth great-grandfather, David Ross, was a sergeant nearing age 60 when an engagement in the winter of 1776 led Congress to note his laudable and exemplary contributions to the cause.

Who were these rebels? What motivated them to fight in the American Revolution? What did they actually do? My sixth great-grandfather, David Ross, was a sergeant nearing age 60 when an engagement in the winter of 1776 led Congress to note his laudable and exemplary contributions to the cause.

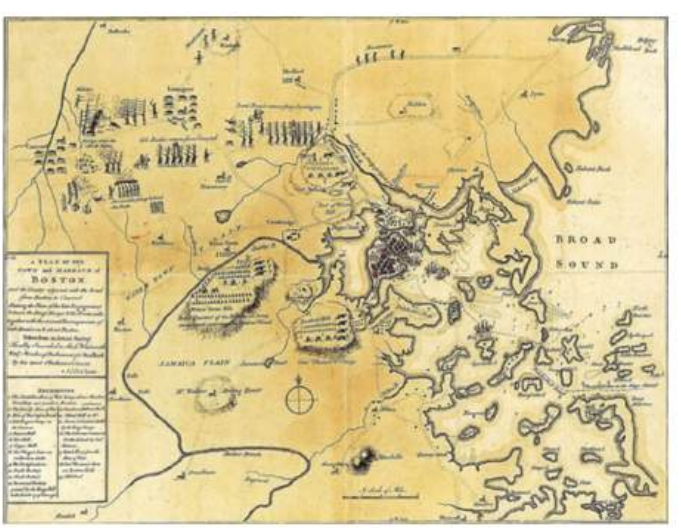
Now, I was curious about their stories. Let's start with the father, David.

I'll need access to the Military records index 1775-1783 at the FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City to explore his career as a private. I'll focus instead on his brief encounter with Britain's Blue Mountain Valley transport ship in January 1776. This wasn't heroism on the scale of those who fought at Bunker Hill, Lexington, or Yorktown. No blood was actually shed. I like the story because it reveals our rebels' creative solutions to leverage British weaknesses.

One of Britain's biggest challenges was managing the logistics of supply lines that stretched across the Atlantic to Britain. By the fall of 1775, the British had won the Battle of Bunker Hill but suffered enormous losses in a bloody battle. In the following months, the smaller, more agile Continental Army laid siege to the British garrison at Boston. Meanwhile, British military planners in London started planning an attack in the Spring. Maj. Gen. William Howe and his troops were left to hunker down for the winter on a peninsula in Boston, dependent on mercantile transport ships for food.

Naval correspondence from September2 described the plan to send a fleet of transport ships to Boston Harbor to supply the besieged garrison, including the Blue Mountain Valley, a transport ship under contract with the British Treasury. Unfortunately for the Blue Mountain Valley and her crew, their plans collided with fierce storms as they crossed the North Atlantic.

The typical four-to-eight-week crossing took nearly thirteen weeks. On Thursday, January 18, 1776, the battered crew of sixteen sailors finally sighted land off Egg Harbor, New Jersey. They were over 250 nautical miles south of their destination. The transport captain, James Hamilton Dempster, under strict orders not to enter a port without contacting a British Navy ship, made for Sandy Hook at the entrance of New York Harbor.3



A mostly accurate hand-colored map depicting the 1775 Battles of Lexington and Concord and the Siege of Boston. J. DeCosta - From the Library of Congress American Memory.

After a day of waiting for the sighting of a British ship, the Blue Mountain Valley crew signaled the Sandy Hook Lighthouse for the aid of a local pilot. The call was answered by a whaling skiff sent from the lighthouse. Captain Dempster responded not with a request for a pilot but with a request that his man be taken to shore. The crew of the whaling skiff returned to shore with First Mate Joseph Woolcombe carrying confidential letters and the instructions from Captain Dempster to go...

Dempster planned that if Woolcombe did not return within 24 hours, the Blue Mountain Valley would depart without him and the needed retrofit.

The Continental Army anticipated the approach of unarmed transport ships. The whaling skiff that responded was piloted by a confederate, William Henry Dobbs, a lookout for the New York Committee of Safety. When he returned to port, Dobbs and Woolcombe were captured by New York Committee of Safety guards and immediately reported.5

Now, we finally get to New Jersey's part.

The New York Committee of Safety realized that to avoid detection by the British warships in the harbor, they had to bring in their New Jersey counterparts. The call was answered by Col. William Alexander, known as "Lord Stirling."6 From his headquarters on Newark Bay in Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, Lord Stirling was already raising and organizing the first two New Jersey Continental regiments authorized by Congress. With an opportunity for glory, he immediately set out for Amboy, near the mouth of the Raritan River, to procure a boat.

"A Draught of New York from the Hook to New York Town" by Mark Tiddeman, published by Mount and Page, 1742. Source: David Rumsey davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~33282 0~90101179#.

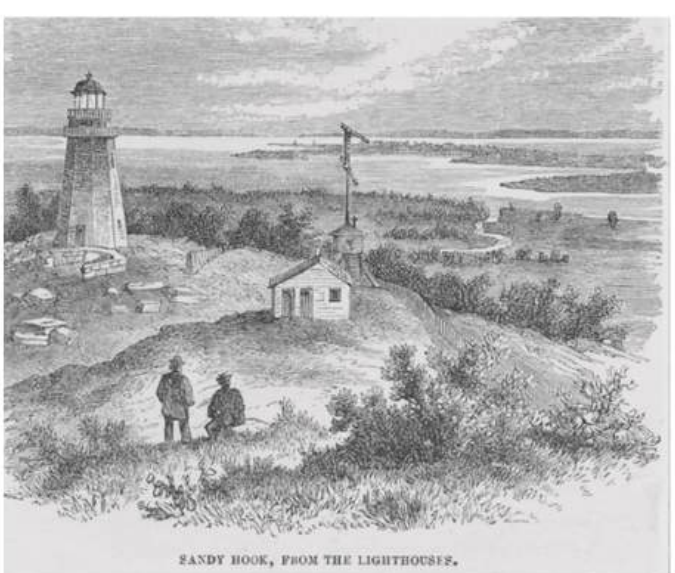
"up to New York (in case there were any of the Kings Ships of War there) in order to get some Intelligence or directions from them" on how to proceed, and "whether he could be furnished with a Pilot or Convoy."4

On January 24th, Lord Stirling set off from Amboy, New Jersey, in his shallop7 with a pilot and forty men in the early morning darkness. To his surprise, he was joined by three other shallops from Elizabeth Town, each with forty men. These men were the recruits, including my 6th great-grandfather, David Ross, as a sergeant in the crew. As Lord Stirling later described the scene in a report to John Hancock:

> *"I thought it a Matter of so much Importance that I immediately set out for Amboy, and there Seized a pilot Boat and with forty Men was Just pushing out about two yesterday Morning when I was Joined by three other Boats from Elizabeth Town with about forty Men Each, many of them Gent from Elizabeth Town who Voluntarily Came on this Service under the Command of Col [Elias] Dayton & Col [Edward] Thomas, we found her about Six leagues S.E. of Sandy Hook we Boarded & took her without opposition she proves to be the Blue Mountain Valley Commanded by Capt. James Hamilton Dempster laden with Coal Porter & Sour-Crout &c"8*

When Captain Dempster from the *Blue Mountain Valley* saw the four shallops approaching in the dawn light, we have to think he assumed they were from the squadron of Royal Navy ships assembling in New York harbor. You tend to see what you expect to see. Wearing the coat of a British naval officer, Captain William Rogers made himself highly visible among the four small boats and was welcomed aboard the ship at 10 am. Captain Dempster had been fooled, and the *Blue Mountain Valley* was easily taken.

Lord Stirling was disappointed to discover little more than a cargo of coal, dead pigs, and an array of spoiled food. However, his fast response and the comportment of the crew of volunteers earned him a promotion and a hat-tip from Congress for the crew:



Sandy Hook, from the lighthouses. Dated between circa 1760 and circa 1872. Source: digitalcollections.nypl.org /items/510d47da-2f0b-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99

> *"[Resolved] That the alertness, activity and good conduct of Lord Stirling, and the forwardness and spirit of the gentlemen, and others, from Elizabeth town, who voluntarily assisted him in taking the ship Blue Mountain Valley, were laudable and exemplary; and that his lordship be directed to secure the capture, until the further order of the Congress and that, in the mean time, he cause such part of the loading, as would otherwise perish, to be disposed of by sale."*

Col. William Alexander, or "Lord Stirling" as he was known in formal documents, went on to an illustrious career. This quiet moment of celebration may have been the highlight of my great-grandfather David Ross's career. The entire story was captured in a report filed on February 9th, 1776 by Robert Ogden of the Elizabeth Town Committee of Safety to John Hancock.9

David's son Ezekiel Ross may be my subject for a future adventure. Stay tuned.

This was an extraordinary period in global history, and it inspired me to launch the Stories250 initiative. I hope you'll join me by sharing your own stories of your ancestors 250 years ago (give-or-take 50 years.)

FOOTNOTES

1. *A few years ago, I felt like I'd been hoarding the treasure, so I scanned my copy, snipped out the chapter referencing my living cousins, and posted it to the Internet Archive. You can find it today at Harger & Allied Families on the Internet Archive. While you're there, toss them a donation. Book: "Harger and Allied Families (abridged)" archive.org/details/03g9-000e Internet Archive (accessed 15 January 2026).*

2. *Philip Stephens to Samuel Graves, September 26, 1775, in William B. Clark et al., eds. Naval Documents of the American Revolution (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1964-2019), Volume 2: 735-736 (Images from the Internet Archive: archive.org/details/navaldocumentsof02unit/page/736/mode/2up)*

3. *"War at Sea and Waterways (1775–1783)," May 19, 2020, by Eric Wiser for AllThingsLiberty.com: (allthingsliberty.com/2020/05/blue-mountain-valley-and-the-rise-of-lord-stirling)*

4. *"Deposition of Joseph Woolcombe," in William B. Clark et al., eds. Naval Documents of the American Revolution (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1964-2019), Volume 3: 1013 (archive.org/details/navaldocumentsof03unit/page/1013/mode/2up)*

5. *"Minutes of the Committee of Safety," in William B. Clark et al., eds. Naval Documents of the American Revolution (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1964-2019), Volume 3: 902-903 (archive.org/details/navaldocumentsof03unit/page/902/mode/2up)*

6. *Col. William Alexander was a colorful character; the back story to why they called him "Lord Stirling" is an entertaining distraction. More at newyorkalmanack.com/2023/04/major-general-william-alexander-lord-stirling-a-short-biography*

Article shared from https://projectkin.substack.com/p/truth-betsy-ross-stories250

SCAN ME

7. *A small boat that can navigate shallow waters. John Smith described a shallop for exploring the Chesapeake Bay in the early 17th century. NPS Chesapeake National Trail. (nps.gov/cajo/learn/historyculture/the-voyages.htm)*

8. *"Lord Stirling to John Hancock," in William B. Clark et al., eds. Naval Documents of the American Revolution (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1964-2019), Volume 3: 958 (archive.org/details/navaldocumentsof03unit/page/958/mode/2up)*

9. *"Robert Ogden to John Hancock," in William B. Clark et al., eds. Naval Documents of the American Revolution (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1964-2019), Volume 3: 1200-1203 (archive.org/details/navaldocumentsof03unit/page/1200/mode/2up)*

FAMILY ENDNOTE

Family members mentioned in this story:

- John Ross (1660-1702)
- George Ross (1629-1709)
- David Ross (1720-1795)
- Ezekiel Ross (1756-1845)

Copyright 2026 Barbara Tien

A List of the Officers & Men Belonging to the Melitia of Elizabeth Town Who Entered on Board of three Different Shallops as Volunteers in Order to take the Ship *Blue Mountain Valley* Jany 22d 1776 Under the Command of Elias Dayton Coll

1 Elias Dayton Coll
2 Edward Thomas Lieut Coll
3 Oliver Spencer Captain
4 William Britten Captain
5 Francis Barber 1st Lieut
6 Aaron Hatfield 1st Lieut
7 Thomas Morrel 2 Lieut
8 George Everson Quartermaster
9 Smith H[at]field Capt Boat
10 John Thomas Capt Boat
11 John Trail Capt Boat
12 William Barnet Surgeon
13 William Higens Sergt
14 David Ross Sergt
15 Henry Baker Sergt
16 Sall Smith
17 Lewis Blanchard
18 Edmund Thomas
19 Thos Elstone
20 Ephraim Marsh
21 Adam Lee
22 Thomas Quigley
23 [blank] Macarty
24 Henry M'Munagal
25 Price pareel
26 Barny Ogden
27 Timy B. Stout
28 Jos: Mecker Jun[r]
29 Geo: Weeks
30 Edwd Connet
31 Azerrias Beaty
32 David Stewart
33 Dall Craig
34 Thos Lee
35 Stephen Wheeler
36 Farrington price
37 Elijah Woodruff
38 Dall Woodruff
39 Aaron Ogden
40 Edwd Jones
41 Wm Clark
42 Jona: Clark
43 Jona Nichols
44 Sall Mann
45 Silas Freeman
46 Wm Mecker
47 Sall Ogden
48 Gabriel Meeker
49 Jona: Piersons
50 Ellihue Piersons
51 Dall Bo[ute]yt
52 Robt Spencer
53 Wm Ramsden
54 Sall Sealey
55 Sall Lee
56 Thos Hoyt
57 Lewis Woodruff
58 Isaah Gray
59 Willm Livingston Jnr
60 Browst Livingston
61 John Hendrix
62 Sall Morehouse
63 Jacob Carle
64 Benja Woodruff
65 Jonathn Woodruff
66 Benjn Hinds
67 John Gray
68 James Clenchey
69 John Miller
70 John Runyon
71 Nicholas Deane
72 Moses Connet
73 Godfrey Blackney
74 Timy B[a]rns
75 Simon Simonson
76 Richd Miller
77 John Miller 2d

The Above is a True List to the [best] of My Knowledge & Beliefs
Edw[d] Thomas

Elizth Town F[e]by 9 1776

The report filed on February 9th, 1776, includes a complete listing of all crew members, including Sergeant David Ross.

"Punch Bowl." *Depicts English politician John Wilkes (1727-97), a proponent of English civil liberties, parliamentary reform, and American rights, paired with the radical politician and William Murray, Earl of Mansfield (1705-1793), Lord Chief Justice and head of the English legal system. The bowl was commissioned by Wilke's supporters against Wilke's arrest in 1763 for publishing an article against the policies of King George III and Prime Minister Bute. He fled the country but was imprisoned in 1768 upon his return.*

Credit: *Produced in Jingdezhen, China, 1770-1775*
Hard-paste Porcelain, Enamels In the collection of the Museum of the American Revolution, 2012.00.0001

BARBARA TIEN

Barbara is the "ringleader" at Projectkin and is committed to helping more people get their stories told. She writes for both her Substack publications at https://Projectkin.org, and https://MissionGenealogy.org.

SCAN ME

1720–1803

THE COFFIN FAMILY

Through Line in the American Revolutionary War

Mary Dicks (Coffin) Newby (1792-1882), dated July 1876. With a November birthday, she would have been 83 years old and photographed in Indiana.

As a little kid, I remember giggling when I first heard the name Coffin. I was shocked to discover that it was part of our family, and intrigued to learn of its historic roots in England, as Coffyn1.

One of my treasured heirlooms today is this stereoscopic photograph of my 3rd great-grandmother, Mary Dicks Coffin (Newby) (1792-1882). I knew this image was important for at least two reasons. First, she is a woman born in the 18th century who was captured at the end of the 19th century in the photographic laser-disc of its day.2 Second, she was emblematic of the generation that crossed the country from North Carolina through Ohio to Indiana as part of the Great Quaker Migration ahead of the American Civil War.

What I didn't realize was that Mary was also of the same generation as cousins who fought as British flag officers in the Revolutionary War. Not only was it our civil war with Britain, it divided families — including mine.

As a descendant of the American line, my family's attention has focused on my 5th great-grandfather, William Coffin (1720-1803), his descendants, and relations. Like his father, William was born on Nantucket Island, Massachusetts. William's great-grandfather, Tristram Coffin (1609-1681), was born into a wealthy family in Brixton, Devonshire, England. As a royalist during the First English Civil War, he chose to leave for America rather than stay and fight.3

In addition to his wife, Dionis Stevens (1610–1684), and five children, Tristram also brought his widowed mother, Joanna Kember (1584-1661), and two of his sisters, Eunice Coffin (1618–1648) and Mary Coffin (1621–1691). The family arrived in Newburyport in late summer 1642 on the ship "Hector."4 Wealth helped the family flourish in New England during the first couple of decades, setting down roots in Haverhill and later Newbury, Massachusetts.

Coffin House, Newbury, MA; from a c. 1907 postcard. It was built in 1678 as a home for Tristram Coffin (1631–1703), son of the elder Tristram, who moved to Nantucket in 1660. Now a museum for Historic New England.

Nantucket Island, 1660

In 1659, Tristram, along with some of his sons and friends, formed a group to purchase Nantucket Island for thirty pounds and two beaver-skin hats. He moved there with his family in 1660.

Seal for the Nantucket Historical Association incorporates not only whaling harpoons but also the two top hats and 30 coins..

Tristram's daughter, Mary Coffin (1645–1717), the older sister of William's grandfather, John Coffin (1647–1711), married another descendant of the purchasing group, Nathaniel Starbuck (1636–1719).5

Quakerism in Nantucket by 1708

Mary and her husband led the Quaker movement on Nantucket, forming the first meeting in 1708. Mary served as an elder, and their son, Nathaniel Jr., served as clerk.6 In the forty years after 1708, the Meeting outgrew a series of meeting houses and expansions. By the late 1750s, the Friends community on Nantucket had grown to 1,500 persons.

Historic American Buildings Survey, Creator. Society of Friends Meetinghouse, Fair Street, Nantucket, Nantucket County, MA. Documentation Compiled After. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/ma0409. Built in 1838 as a school, it was converted into a meeting house in 1864.

Quakerism spread quickly in the British American colonies, founding notable communities in the mid-Atlantic states.7 The first Quakers to settle in the coastal Albemarle Sound of the Carolinas came to the area in 1655,8 decades before King Charles II granted William Penn a charter for what would become Pennsylvania in 1681. Another group settled in Perquimans County, Carolina, during the 1670s, after a visit by George Fox in 1672. By 1680, the North Carolina Yearly Meeting was established to bring together several Quaker monthly meeting groups.

Friends Move South

Political support helped encourage Quaker migration to the South. In 1695, when Quaker John Archdale was appointed governor of North Carolina, his passage of an act exempting his fellow Friends from participating in the local militia was both rational and a key

inducement to migration. Quaker communities were obligated to pay additional taxes to the crown in exchange for opting out of local militias. Though expensive, this token of respect encouraged more Quakers to move to the region.

In the 1750s, nearly 100 years after the first communities were established in the Albemarle Sound, Quakers from Pennsylvania and Virginia began migrating to the verdant farmlands of the Piedmont region in North Carolina. By 1754, the New Garden Meeting House had been established near what is now Guilford College, in the city of Greensboro, North Carolina.

Between 1771 and 1775, New Garden Meeting received 43 certificates identifying individual Quakers from the Nantucket Meeting who were relocating to New Garden.

The Flood of Friends in the 1770s

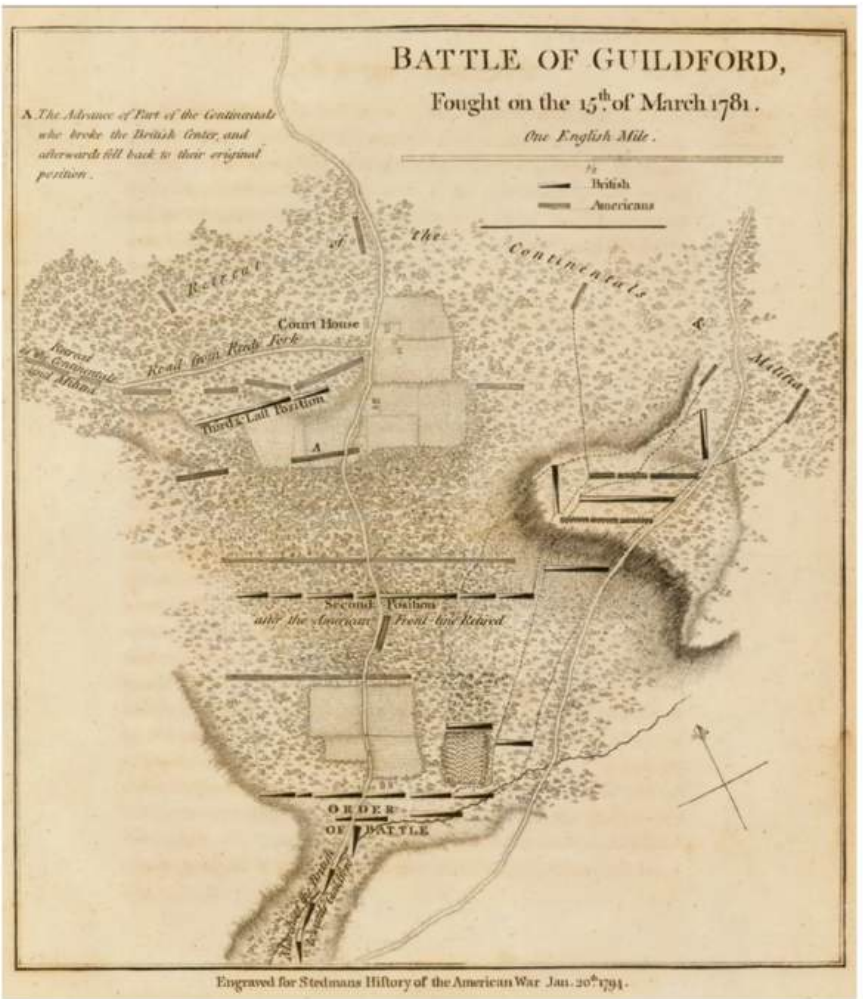
In 1773, nearly twenty-five years later, William Coffin, his wife Priscilla Paddock, and their ten children moved to New Garden, "with a flood of Friends" from Nantucket Island.9 The growing stressors of poor agricultural land and a whaling-based economy on Nantucket Island, combined with the growing Quaker community, proved an irresistible inducement.

Before 1780, most of the iconic battles of the Revolutionary War had taken place at faraway northern locations, such as Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, Fort Ticonderoga, Quebec, Boston, and Trenton. By 1778, however, it was already clear that the British were facing a stalemate in the northern colonies. After the Continental Army cemented its alliance with France in 1778, the war dynamics shifted, prompting a flurry of British efforts to negotiate a peace settlement.

The Revolution Found Them

By June, when the Continental Congress rejected the Earl of Carlisle's peace commission, the British implemented a "Southern Strategy" based on a belief that strong Loyalist support and the region's economic importance would allow them to regain control. Pressing their superior naval forces in battles at Savannah, Charleston, and Baton Rouge suggested such a strategy might work.

In 1780, George Washington promoted Nathanael Greene (1742-1786) to the role of commander of the Southern Department. A former Quaker,10 foundry owner, and Rhode Island politician before the war, Greene had proven himself as a competent quartermaster and strategic battlefield commander.



Battle of Guilford, Fought on the 15th of March 1781" was the first published for "Stedman's History of the American War," January 20th, 1794—more about the map at the David Rumsey Map Center at Stanford.

In the Southern campaign, Greene's creative guerrilla tactics turned battlefield losses into significant patriot victories in the War.

The Bloody Battle's Legacy for the Family

I don't yet have a clear understanding of the lives and intermarriages of family members during this period. What I do know is that by the time of the March 1781 Battle of Guilford Court, William Coffin had been an active part of the Quaker community at the New Garden Monthly Meeting for seven years. He was 61 years old, and his wife, Priscilla Paddock (1722–1803), was 60. All but the two youngest of his eleven children were adults. He and his wife already had a dozen or more grandchildren, many of whom were born into the community at New Garden.

When the bloody battle of Guilford Courthouse found its way to their home, meeting house, and farmlands, the Quaker community was clear-eyed. As the battle brought the wounded into their homes, they stepped up to tend to the injured and, afterward,

helped bury the dead. It was an experience that would leave a long shadow. William Coffin's future grandchild, Levi Coffin, Jr. (1798-1877), whose parents were Levi Coffin, Sr. (1763-1833) and Prudence Williams (1758-1845), described the scene in his memoir about his father, "Reminiscences of Levi Coffin: President of the Underground Railroad."11

> *"The battle of Guilford Court-House, fought about the close of the Revolutionary War, commenced near New Garden Meeting-House and continued along the old Salisbury road, a distance of about three miles, to Martinsville, the old Guilford Court-House, near where the main battle was fought. A number of soldiers were killed near the meeting-house and along the road, and were buried by the roadside and in the Friends' burying ground near the meeting-house. I have often seen their graves.*
>
> *"After the battle the meeting-house was used as a hospital for the wounded soldiers, and my grandfather Williams' house was occupied by the wounded British officers. My grandfather Coffin's house was used by the American officers as a hospital for their sick and wounded. The two farms joined, and the headquarters of the different forces were thus in close proximity.*
>
> *"The small-pox broke out among the British officers, and my grandfather Williams caught the disease from them and died.*

At its heart, it was a civil war.

Though history remembers Nathanael Greene's forces as having lost the Battle of Guilford Courthouse for the Continental Army, they turned it into a Pyrrhic victory for Lord Cornwallis and the British. The National Park Service film, "Another Such Victory," offers a helpful dramatization of the battle and provides an overview of the events that occurred on the fateful day of March 15, 1781.

This battle interpretation and re-enactment is from the National Park Service site for Guilford Courthouse National Military Park in North Carolina.

SCAN ME

On March 18th, after burying their remaining dead and collecting their wounded, the British army decamped to Wilmington, Delaware, to heal and restock provisions. From there, Cornwallis made the fateful decision to lead his army back to Virginia. Seven months later, they were routed at the October battle at Yorktown.12 Meanwhile, though in defeat, Nathanael Greene's Continental Army marched south to liberate South Carolina and Georgia from British control.

One of the many surprises to me was discovering a validation of a reference I had heard from historians who call it a civil war between the British colonists and their home country. Indeed, in my own family, I discovered that just as William Coffin and his community were heroes, so were three of his cousins — except that they fought valiantly for the British side.

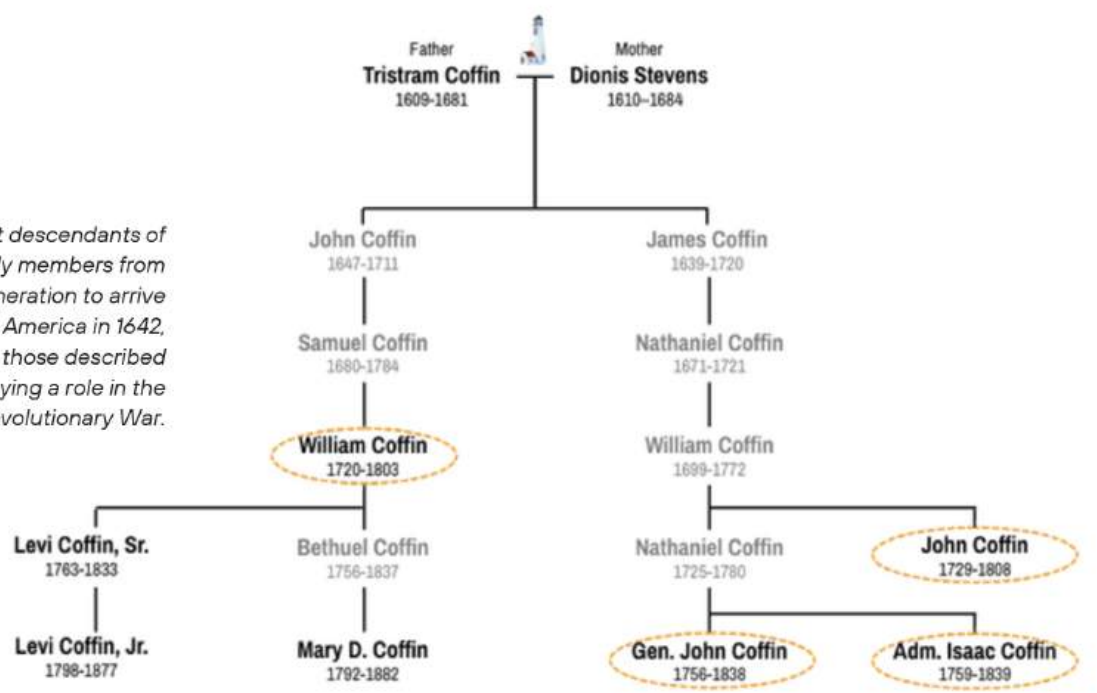
The three cousins (one and two generations younger) had descended through one of Tristram Coffin's other sons, James

Coffin (1639-1720). Each is remembered in Canadian history for their strategic acumen on the British side. We'll start with the two named John.

John Coffin (1729-1808) and General John Coffin (1756-1838).13 The older John was a businessman at the time of the Revolution with loyalist leanings who, after founding a distillery at Pres-de-Ville, was in the right place at the right time to stop an attack on Quebec led by Major-General Richard Montgomery.

The younger John was just 24 in 1775 when he launched his military career at the Battle of Bunker Hill. He rose quickly after serving in New Jersey, New York, Georgia, and South Carolina. He was promoted to major in 1782 and to general in 1819, following the conclusion of the war.14

Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin, Baronet (1759-1839)15
As General John's younger brother, Isaaac joined the war effort at an even younger age; he was just 14 when he volunteered for the British navy in 1777. He was promoted to lieutenant just three years later and continued to rise quickly. He achieved the rank of commander in July 1781, a few months before the end of American hostilities after the Battle of Yorktown in October of that fateful year. Isaac Coffin went on to distinguish himself in the British Navy, becoming an Admiral during the Napoleonic Wars and being created a baronet for his service to the crown.



Relevant descendants of Coffin family members from the first generation to arrive in America in 1642, highlighting those described as playing a role in the Revolutionary War.

Each of these Coffin cousins played a different role in the revolution. These stories from the British side were notably absent from the American retelling of the family story.

> ### *Ken Burns Series: The American Revolution*
>
> *I included this narrative of battles and strategies based on what I've gleaned from historians and documents. For a closer look at these details, I defer to the numerous historians, museums, and academic publications that are unveiling significant events in anticipation of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in July 2026. PBS is conveniently releasing Ken Burns' new Revolutionary War series starting on Sunday, November 16.*

The documentary is supported with a terrific public site, "Explore the Revolution," as well as social media channels and YouTube clips. With family heroes to look out for, I'm excited to watch this series.

SCAN ME

FAMILY ENDNOTE

Family members, cousins, and relations mentioned in this story:

- Mary D. Coffin (1792-1882)
- William Coffin (1720-1803)
- Tristram Coffin (1609-1681)
- Dionis Stevens (1610–1684)
- Joanna Kember (1584-1661)
- Eunice Coffin (1618–1648)
- Mary Coffin (1621–1691)
- Mary Coffin (1645–1717)
- John Coffin (1647–1711)
- Nathaniel Starbuck (1636–1719)
- Priscilla Paddock (1722–1803)
- Levi Coffin, Sr. (1763-1833)
- Prudence Williams (1758-1845)
- Levi Coffin, Jr. (1798-1877)
- Richard Williams (1726–1781)
- Prudence Beals (1726–1815)
- Prudence Williams (1758–1845)
- James Coffin (1639-1720)
- John Coffin (1729-1808)
- General John Coffin (1756-1838)
- Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin, Baronet (1759-1839)

FOOTNOTES

1. *Learn more in The Coffin Family, edited by Louis Coffin, 1962, Nantucket Historical Association.*
2. *Obviously, the stereograph wasn't a laserdisc, but like the orphaned video technology, it was a great idea, slightly ahead of its time. I'm always happy to find evidence of nerdy roots in my family tree.*

3. *The Underground Railroad: Excerpts from Reminiscences by Levi Coffin Posted by Jacki Kellum. "Within 100 years, large settlements would migrate again out of the slaveholding regions of the South, up into Ohio, to found new communities in the newly established Northwestern Territories. This remarkable community in New Garden also had a historic role in the Underground Railroad."*

4. *Specific references to the ship "Hector" from "Coffinnotes" at Jackson's Web. Should be confirmed elsewhere.*

5. *A Coffin family history narrative was published by the Nantucket Historical Association in 1962, including a great deal more detail. The branching of the Coffin family will become relevant later in this post.*

6. *Nantucket Historical Association website description of the history of Quakerism on the island.*

7. *A detailed recounting of Hannah (Baskel) Phelps and her family's conversion is worth exploring if you're interested in how Quakerism took hold in the colonies. I suggest starting with the 2013 Hannah Baskel Phelps post on The Raconteuse Expose on Blogger, (theraconteuseexpose.blogspot.com/2013/06/hannah-baskel-phelps-phelps-hill-quaker.html)*

8. *From the Springfield, NC Quaker friends history page, "Where did we come from." There's further detail on these first Quaker communities in the Albemarle Sound area in the Blogger site, "History Archives." Note this older link does not support a secure connection: (www.ancestoryarchives.com/2013/11/the-quaker-communities-in-albemarle.html)*

9. *"New Garden Friends Meeting: the Christian people called Quakers" by Hilty, Hiram H., page 7, sourced from the Internet Archive.*

10. *Greene was raised in a prosperous Quaker family in Rhode Island. After his father's death, he took over his father's foundry and became active in politics. In July 1773, after his increasing involvement in resistance to British authority, he was suspended from Quaker meetings.*

11. *This book famously captures stories about the Underground Railroad, as led by Levi Coffin, Sr. (1763-1833) and memorialized by his son, Levi Coffin, Jr. (1798-1877). The elder Levi was William Coffin's son. He was nineteen and unmarried at the time of the Battle in 1781. His future wife, Prudence Williams (1758–1845), was one of sixteen children to Richard Williams (1726–1781) and Prudence Beals (1726–1815). Their house is the one mentioned as occupied by wounded British soldiers during the battle. Some of their soldiers carried smallpox, which infected and ultimately killed Richard Williams.*

    Both Richard Williams and William Coffin are among the few practicing Quakers recognized by the Daughters of the American Revolution for their patriotic services caring for the wounded soldiers and burying the dead at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. They can be found on the DAR website under Ancestor numbers A126581 and A023859, respectively.

12. *Like many Americans, I learned about the strategic drama of the Battle of Yorktown in the musical Hamilton. I was so smitten by that moment that I included it in the timeline for my Lafayette project.*

13. *Details for both of these John Coffins can be found in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography.*

14. *After the release of this post, I discovered a trove of work devoted to this colorful loyalist wing of the family. A humorous vignette is captured in "The Loyalists of Massachusetts and the Other Side of the American Revolution," by James Henry Stark, 1907, which describes the younger Major John Coffin's exploits during the final siege at Yorktown:*

> *Whilst Coffin was attached to Cornwallis, he was able to be of great service to him, but the bravery, not to say the extraordinary sagacity mingled with audacity of one man, could not save the army. Lord Cornwallis' army cooped up in Yorktown by a superior army of French and Americans, and blockaded by a French fleet, was in danger of starvation, and Coffin stood almost alone in successful forays, in which he frequently eluded the whole American and French army, and returned laden with the fruits of his success. In one of these raids he accidently came to the house of a wealthy planter whose daughter was to be married that day. He quietly surrounded the house with his troops and knocking at the door, sent in word that he wished to speak with the proprietor. On presenting himself, the gentleman was courteously made aware of his condition. He was told not to make any noise, but to order sufficient turkeys, ham, wine and other provisions to be put up, to satisfy his men; if this was done no harm would happen, but on the contrary, if any resistance was attempted, everything ancl everybody in the house would be destroyed. Coffin's character and resolution were well known, so the planter thought it best to graciously comply with the mandate. A large quantity of provisions was thus secured. Captain Coffin supped with the wedding party, danced with the bride, and left in safety, taking care that no alarm should be given, and reached Cornwallis without accident by daylight.*
>
> *Even when the enemy held Charleston, during which time he ran very great risks of being taken prisoner, he went to see Miss Ann Matthews, daughter of William Matthews, Esq., of St. John's Island, to whom he was eventually married in 1781. On the occasion of one visit, the house was searched for him by authority, and the gallant soldier took refuge under Miss Matthews' ample dress. At that time ladies wore hoops and they must have been of considerable size, when Major Coffin, who stood six feet two and was proportionately stout, could successfully conceal himself under one.*

15. *While Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin, 1st Baronet, GCH, is detailed in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, his story benefits from the added contextualization of Wikipedia for those unfamiliar with Canadian and British history, politics, and titles.*

Article shared from
https://projectkin.substack.com/p/coffin-family-in-the-american-revolutionary

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Barbara Tien

ANNE WENDEL

1727–1822

Anne blogs at Grandma's Granny's Family Album https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com

SCAN ME

MY 5TH GREAT–GRANDPARENTS MARY COON AND JOHN RUSHTON IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

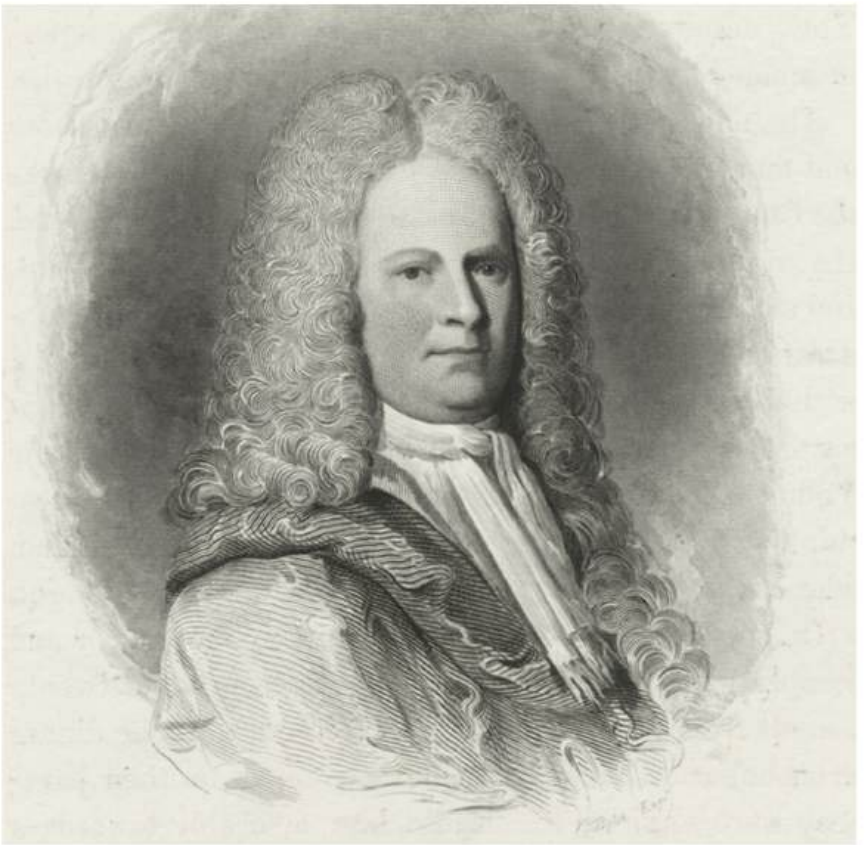
When a war starts in a divided town, which neighbors do you trust?

British Occupation of New York City, Bowery Boys Podcast, https://www.boweryboyshistory.com/2018/06/new-york-city-during-the-revolutionary-war-beseiged-and-occupied-by-the-british-1776-1783.html

Good day to you! My name is Mary Coon Rushton, and here I am, an old widow more than 90 years on this earth.1 I tell my story humbly, as best I recollect, if any care to hear what went on last century, when one country turned itself into another.

I was born in 1727,2 probably in Rye, New York Province, and brought up with my brothers Jeremiah and Jacob, and some sisters too.3 Rye 'twas a small but up-and-coming town back then, 2400 people just before the War, on the Boston Post Road, real close to New York City. Any hard-working person could make a good living. 'Twas a good place for tradespeople to make money, with so many travellers going back and forth to the city from Boston. If the travelling slowed down, a body could always go into the city to buy and sell.4

My father, Hanness Coon, oft said he came to these shores a starving peasant, soon orphaned, and the great Caleb Heathcote, the Mayor of New York City himself! took him in and apprenticed him. Mr. Heathcote 'twas a good man. He gave my father a bed, enough food for a growing fifteen-year-old lad, kept him in clothes, gave him an education, and taught him a trade. Indeed, Mr. Heathcote had a large piece of land in Westchester, near to Rye, and he named it Scarsdale after his home in England.5 My father was real proud to be his apprentice.6



The Honorable Caleb Heathcote, 32nd Mayor of New York City Image Source: Wikimedia Commons. From the New York Public Library's Digital Library under the digital ID 5f65d940-c60c-012f-5e38-58d385a7bc34

My brother Jeremiah bought a lot of land on the White Plains.7 We didn't have much land growing up, but we had enough. I married John Rushton when I were twenty-three and he only eighteen.8 Age doesn't count for much, I don't think. I could tell he were a good man, even that young. John 'twas born in Ireland9 and came to Westchester County with his family, as a child. He had a goodly number of brothers and sisters.10 John stood only five feet and three inches, with light eyes and brown hair.11

We had our children right away, all healthy, three boys and four girls. Only in the end did it get hard; I were worn out by then, I reckon. I named them all for our sisters and brothers; they were real important to me back then. I had my last little baby, Samuel, when I was 44.12

John always said 'twas important to be part of something, to be neighborly, to be a part of your town. When he were 28, he joined the militia in Captain Buckhout's Company. He were just a labourer then,13 but he had big dreams, he did. I didn't see the need for it, with five children under the age of ten, but he felt 'twas proper. If the French or Indians came to attack New York City, he said, we needed to be ready to defend our homes. In the end he didn't have to fight, so that was all right. They only trained a few days, all near to home.14

By and by, we had a good business fashioning saddles, harnesses, bridles and such,15 as well as working a farm. John went to the city so much, buying and selling, he served on a jury there.16 He even voted in the city,17 since he could vote there without owning land or being a resident even.18 We didn't own land.

I never wanted to leave Rye, but John said the world 'twas getting bigger. He reckoned all Westchester, and the city even, was our home, not just Rye. The whole world 'twere coming to New York, it seemed. Dutch people, Germans, French, Irish, English, Welsh, Scotsmen, Africans, and the Indians too. Everyone got along with each other, real friendly. Nobody cared where your parents were born or how you prayed. As long as everybody had fair dealings and treated people with respect, we could all prosper. And we did.19 Everybody respected John. He 'twere always being asked to witness a will or a land indenture.20

Until Parliament set everybody to anger.

New York Harbor Waterfront 1727 Panorama Map Source: https://minnstate.pressbooks.pub/ushistory1/chapter/new-york-city-1760

In 1769, John voted for DeLancey, Walton, and Jaunsey,21 men for the common people. They voted for days in the taverns of the city, and DeLancey gave them food and drink to do it too. They put up a Marine Society for the widows and orphans of sailors, and set a viewing gallery in the assembly for the people to come watch.22 I never bothered. I had enough of all that goings-on at home. We had three newspapers a week!23 There weren't a place a body could go to escape men speaking their minds.

I never bothered. I had enough of all that goings-on at home. We had three newspapers a week! There weren't a place a body could go to escape men speaking their minds.

The Sons of Liberty oft met at one of the taverns in Rye.24 All the men went most times. 'Twas important for business, John said, to know what were afoot. The men complained about taxes on sugar, tea, and every kind of paper. We have our own General Assembly to tax us, and we elect them. Well, I say we, but 'twas just white men what owned property could vote in Rye. Even still, we had more voters in New York than any other colony.25

'Twas winter when my father died. I thank God he didn't live to see our sad end. My mother and sisters and I nursed him as he weakened. In his will, I were touched he left my daughter Elizabeth his small spinning wheel and his little Bible, just the New Testament. She were always his favorite.

He left everything to my mother, of course, with just his prized possessions to those he loved best. My brother Jeremiah got his Bible. My sister's husband James got his great chair and brown coat. John and my sister Sarah witnessed the will, along with our son Peter, a man at 24. And my brothers Jeremiah and Jacob 'twere the executors, of course.26

We'd all been too busy with my father and mother to notice, but late that same year, December 1773, the Sons of Liberty brought news that some wild men in Boston threw all the tea off the ships into the harbour. Such waste! They ought to be arrested. And Boston supported those vandals! We just knew King George would do something to punish them. When he closed the whole port of Boston, tho, everyone thought that were too much. The people of Boston would starve without trade! The Sons of Liberty brought word to ask all the colonies to boycott British goods, same as them in Massachusetts.27 I supposed we would too. John made his saddles from hog hide and steer hide he got right here. He had bought British saddle frames in the city, but we started to get them local instead.28

The news changed every day that year, seemed like. I reckon every county in the province of New York wanted to send delegates to some kind of body, they called it a congress, to come from all the colonies. Westchester wanted to, so Rye held a meeting on August 10 1774. John, Jeremiah, and Jacob were all too busy for that foolishness, but we heard plenty about it later. 'Twere full of complaints, all in the most exaggerated words. They made a fuss over the closing of Boston Harbour as a "most cruel, unjust, and unwarrantable act." They fussed about the taxes, saying that "no man shall be taxed without his own consent." They got all het up over Boston, that the punishments were "most unparalleled, rigorous, and unjust pieces of Cruelty and Despotism." They did at least confess loyalty to "the illustrious House of Hanover," King George and his family.

I fretted over the last part, where they wanted a Congress made up, and said they planned to "abide by such Measures as they, in their Wisdom, shall think most conducive upon such an important Occasion."29 Suppose they voted to do some fool thing?

Worst of all, these delegates tweren't even our true delegates in our true General Assembly. These men may have said they were elected, but that were outside the law, in no regular election. Irregular, 'twas what they were.30

The Square House, tavern in Rye where the August 10 1774 meeting was probably held. Pictured here much later, https://www.ryehistory.org/square-house-info

Two months later, eighty men saw reason and wrote in the paper they were sorry for what they did. They said they tweren't a party to any resolutions, and went on that "we also testify our dislike to many hot and furious Proceedings... which we think are more likely to ruin this once happy Country than remove Grievances, if any there are." Likely to ruin our happiness! That's sure! "We also declare our great Desire and full Resolution to live and die peaceable Subjects to our Gracious Sovereign, King George the Third, and his laws." What folly these men twere talked into!

A fortnight later, fifteen of them took it back! Changed their minds again. I have never seen the like!31

In October, this so-called Continental Congress wrote a letter to the King. New York twas the only province to vote against it. So the next January, our own General Assembly, the one we elected proper-like, voted not to follow the Continental Congress. We wrote our own letter to the King, with a whole list of things he needed to fix. A bunch of men didn't like that either; they said we should have our own New York convention.

But in April, we found out King George and Parliament had declared us all in rebellion! Even New York! Our proper General Assembly met over that, and that were the last time they ever met.

But in April, we found out King George and Parliament had declared us all in rebellion! Even New York! Our proper General Assembly met over that, and that were the last time they ever met.32

On April 11, 1775, our family all signed our allegiance to the Crown.33 Governor Tryon wanted to show King George he had nothing to worry about in New York.34 We're nothing like that rabble in Massachusetts. I say we, but it's the men of course, my brothers Jeremiah and Jacob Coon, and our sons, Peter and John Junr, who 'twere proud to sign their names along with their father. They all went to Jeremiah's house, and proceeded to the meeting on the White Plains. Three hundred men 'twere there to sign. "Twas held there on account of the rebels meeting at the same place on the same day... 'twere only two hundred of them.

The next week, that New York convention they called for did meet, in the city. They voted to follow the Continental Congress.35 John said that meant we were in rebellion.

The news changed every day that year, seemed like. I reckon every county in the province of New York wanted to send delegates to some kind of body, they called it a congress, to come from all the colonies. Westchester wanted to, so Rye held a meeting on August 10 1774. John, Jeremiah, and Jacob were all too busy for that foolishness, but we heard plenty about it later. 'Twere full of complaints, all in the most exaggerated words. They made a fuss over the closing of Boston Harbour as a "most cruel, unjust, and unwarrantable act." They fussed about the taxes, saying that "no man shall be taxed without his own consent." They got all het up over Boston, that the punishments were "most unparalleled, rigorous, and unjust pieces of Cruelty and Despotism." They did at least confess loyalty to "the illustrious House of Hanover," King George and his family.

I fretted over the last part, where they wanted a Congress made up, and said they planned to "abide by such Measures as they, in their Wisdom, shall think most conducive upon such an important Occasion."29 Suppose they voted to do some fool thing?

Worst of all, these delegates tweren't even our true delegates in our true General Assembly. These men may have said they were elected, but that were outside the law, in no regular election. Irregular, 'twas what they were.30

"North Bridge, Concord, Massachusetts, April 19, 1775" by Frank T. Merrill, 1909, oil on board. Public Domain, source: https://en.wikipedia.org /wiki/Shot_heard_round_the_world

Just a fortnight later, word came that blood was shed![36] The British soldiers holding Boston shot a passel of farmers, and all the men 'twere so het up over that, they attacked the redcoats! The strangest thing was, the farmers won! They made an army like, and took over the city.

All the King's supporters in Boston had to flee, and where did they come? Here.[37] First 'twas a couple, on horseback, and then some walking, and then whole families in wagons, and finally just poor people pulling handcarts. They carried all they had...chairs, tables, bedding, even candlesticks. And then the pigs, and chickens and sheep. The little children, and the old people...it looked so sad, to see long lines of sorrowful people coming up the road. Some stopped here, but most went on to the city. Little did I know then, I'd be one of them.

Everyone seemed certain then 'twould be war. The King could not just let a whole city fall. They were right.
The Continental Congress started an army, and they got a man from Virginia, George Washington, to be its general. He started heading for Boston, and of course he had to pass through Rye. Governor Tryon had been in England, but he 'twere coming back. The two men 'twere in the city on the same day! And can you believe it, both of them had a revelry to welcome them![38]

Pretty soon we were selling saddles, harnesses, and bridles as fast as we could make them. When we couldn't keep up, we turned to fixing what customers had.

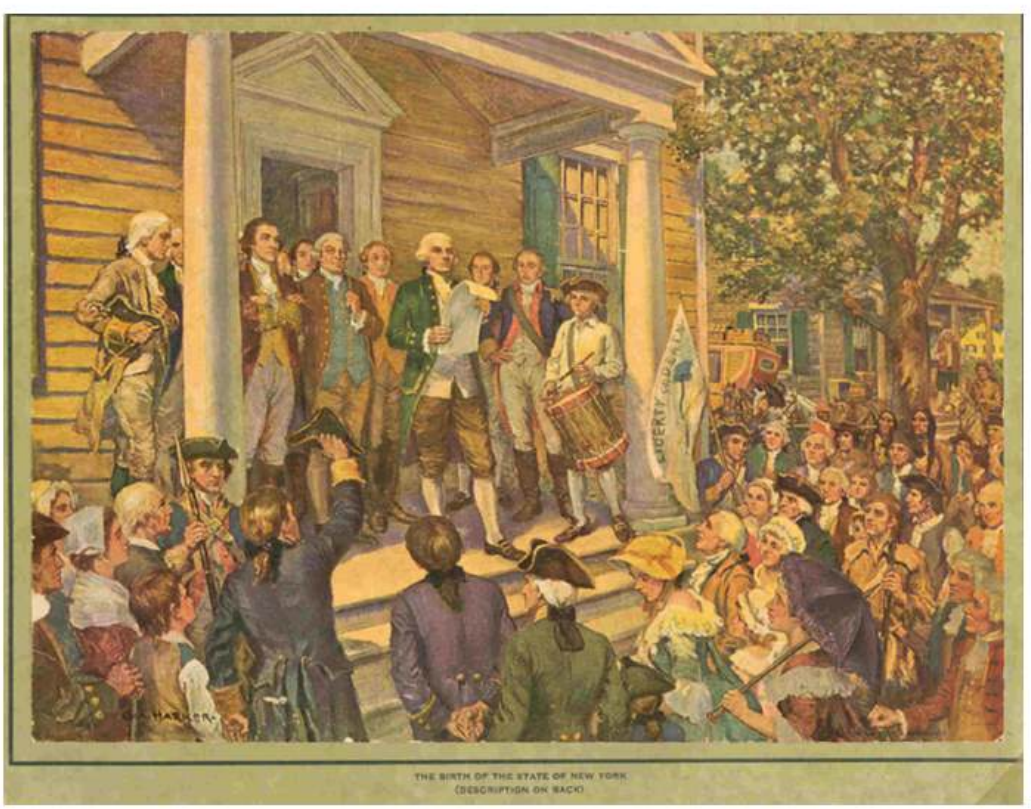
Pretty soon we were selling saddles, harnesses, and bridles as fast as we could make them. When we couldn't keep up, we turned to fixing what customers had. Our son Jeremiah 'twas apprenticed to a cordwainer,[39] but his master let him come back to us to work. We had the oldest boys, and my nephews came to help too. John 'twas in the city more than he were home.

I was affrighted without him, because the roads were full of marauders, and we never knew what kind would walk into the shop. I was affrighted for him too, on account of no telling who he might meet on the road, nor whether he should say he 'twas Tory or Whig. Some of our friends and neighbors had declared a side, and published their names in the paper. We had declared too, I guess, when we signed the Oath of Allegiance. Governor Tryon set the militia to attack all the rebels as traitors, but he couldn't keep up. When they threatened his life, he thought 'twas best to take to a warship, a 64-gun manowar, in New York Harbour, so he ran the province from the Asia after that.[40]

Most of us in Rye were cross with those busybodies calling themselves patriots, turning our lives topsy-turvy. Almost every night the rowdy boys in Rye threw eggs and rotten vegetables, even rocks, at some of the patriots' houses in town, breaking windows. They set into their yards and let their livestock out, took some chickens for dinner. Sometimes they even broke into their houses and stole whatever they could find. Every night, eight or ten raids a night.41

On the roads, Loyalists would harass the Patriots, scare the horses into bolting, call them names. Some of us ladies didn't want to go out, even with a man to protect us; we started shopping in groups only. In Mamaroneck Harbour, just four miles away, they sent ships with supplies to the troops in Boston; sundry Rye people loaded on what we could;42 John added some bridles and harnesses.

Godfrey Haines, a Rye man, was always on the corners and taverns talking against the rebellion. They arrested him, but he escaped to the Governor's ship. Turned out, he plotted with James Lownsbury to kidnap rebel John Thomas! James Horton Junr and sundry Purdy men were arrested for plotting to capture General Washington! Divers Loyalists went down to King's Bridge to spike the cannons there; they were arrested too.43 All Rye men! 'Twas like Rye was the teapot that the tempest was in.



First Public Reading in New York of the Declaration of Independence in White Plains on July 11, 1776 - Rye Free Reading Room, Prelude to the Revolution in a NY Town. by George A. Harker, c. 1915

The same John Thomas, him they tried to kidnap, read what they called the Declaration of Independence on July 11, 1776,44 from the steps of Grace Church. (fool patriots burnt the church down four months later!) The New York delegation hadn't voted on it; they hadn't the authority. Real quick, they had to send somebody to ask for authority, and hold a separate meeting to vote on it. They voted Aye.45

And here we were...declared a separate country.

In August and September, Lord Admiral Howe took over New York City. We thought 'twould be safe again. But 'twas no better. We thought of moving into the city, since John was there so much. But the rents 'twere far too dear. Every Loyalist in the colonies, it seemed, 'twere moving there, leaving their homes, 'twasnt safe where their families had lived, some for generations. Then a great fire laid waste to a quarter of the city...poor souls had to live in Canvas Town, in tents just built on the ashes.46 We decided 'twould be best to stay in Rye, whatever the danger of going back and forth.

One day John was attacked. In broad daylight, three riders approached and demanded his goods. Didn't even claim a side; likely on no side, just the side of mischief. They threw him off the wagon. Luckily he 'tweren't hurt bad. The saddles and such 'twere too much to carry, so they left them, but took all his coin. I told him at almost fifty, he were too old to be traipsing that far every day. He didn't much argue, and when the boys told him the girls and I needed him home to protect us in the shop, 'twould be them to take the wagon into the city every day, it just happened.47

Nary a battle were fought in Rye, but plenty came close. 'Twere the Battle of Throgs Neck, the Battle of Pell's Point, the Skirmish of Heathcote Hill, and the big one, the Battle of White Plains. All that first year, 1776.48

Mary and John's granddaughter, Elizabeth Rushton Worden, daughter of Jeremiah Rushton, about 1860, in author's collection

In the end, we lost the war. The Patriots took everything. We didn't have land, but everybody who did, lost it.

All my children grew up in wartime. Peter were 26 when it started...he didn't marry till late when we were all settled.49 He kept our shop going and the wagon moving, and 'twas always ready with the gun just in case.

John Junr were 24 at the start...he moved to Hempstead where 'twas safer, more Tories, less battles. He got married there to Mary Colefield, on March 10 1781.50 They went with us at the end. He did most of our trade in the city for us.

Our daughter Mary married Abraham Barker after we left,..we knew him from Westchester.51

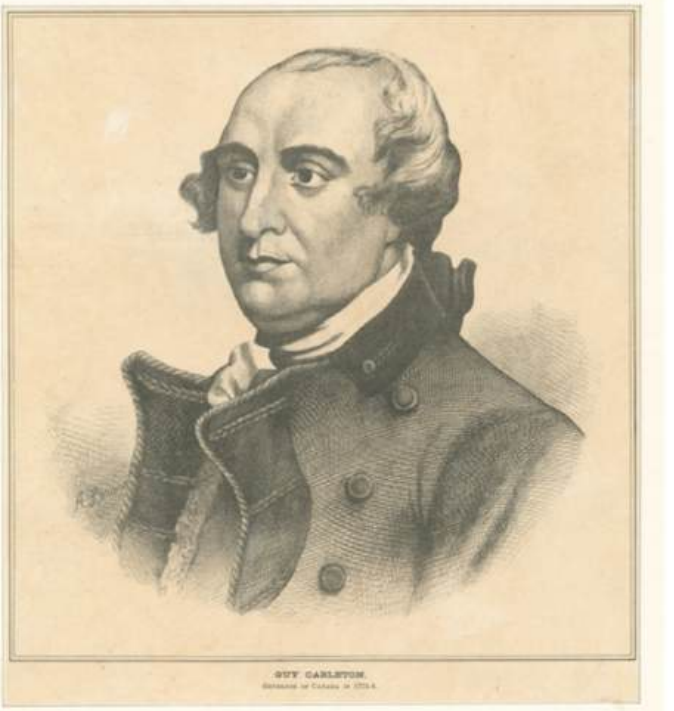
Jeremiah, our third boy, were 17 when it started. He joined the war when he turned 23. He fought with James DeLancey's Westchester Refugees.52 I worried myself sick. But he can tell you about that himself.53 He married Sarah Hall the same year. Their baby, Abraham, was born the year before we left.54

Our daughter Easter were 12 when it started. She married Jonathan Worden, who served with Jeremiah, once we got to our new home.55

And our baby Samuel twere only 5,56 so he knew nothing else, poor little mite.

I cannot tell you about our other girls, Elizabeth57 and Sarah,58 because they grew up and married during wartime when no records were kept. The stone churches were used as prisons, so not a body got married or baptized in them, and no preacher to write it down. People got married at home. Once we got our land grant, weren't no keeping count then neither. People too busy building houses and birthing babies to write it down.

In the end, we lost the war. The Patriots took everything. We didn't have land, but everybody who did, lost it. They said no Tory could sue a Patriot for damage or stealing, but the Patriots could sue the Tories for doing it to them!59 Everybody in Rye knew our son were in the Cowboys.60 We reckoned they would take it out on us. The only place safe, if you could call it that, was inside the city.



Sir Guy Carleton, https://blackloyalist.com/cdc/people/influential/carleton.htm

Jeremiah 'twas promised a land grant for his service, in the King's colony of Nova Scotia. The general the King sent to handle the surrender, Sir Guy Carleton, 'twas a great man. He promised a land grant to everybody who had sworn the oath of allegiance, or done anything for the cause, really. Everybody from every colony just fled to the city...we all counted the days till we could get out.

We were luckier than some. All the ones from Westchester banded together. We were all Westchester Refugees, really, all of us turned away and couldn't go home. We left all together on a ship from New York Harbour to Halifax, Nova Scotia. 'Twas terrible cold, and nothing there...just a garrison town, and thousands of refugees pouring in! We had brought everything we could carry. They gave us food, if you could call it that.

The men worked on our claim so we could get out of Halifax. We finally got our land, one big grant in the Cobequid Mountains for us all to split up. Every family got 500 acres. Well, John and I did, and Peter, and Jeremiah, and my nephew William Coon. John Junr only got 200 acres and he had to go to Ramsheg.61 I don't know why.
All us Westchester Refugees sailed on the same ship to Fort Cumberland. They didn't know what to do with us there either, but at least 'tis a real stone fort. We lived there till we could get to our new land.

Mary and John's 4th great-grandchildren, "on the cannon to the right of entrance to Fort Cumberland N. B. July 12th 1929," photo in author's collection.

Mary and John's 6th great-grandchildren at Fort Cumberland, now a historic site, 2000, photo by author

Our grants are next each other, on the road from Cumberland to London-Derry.62 Road! Hah! 'Twas a trail more like, just wide enough for a horse or a body to fit through the trees. A true wilderness. But 'twas a road all right after the wagons went through, back and forth with the belongings of 400 families. Our lot 'twas all trees, but 'tis a nice stream here. We farm it. 'Tisn't real fertile, like the land in Westchester County, and no city to sell in, but 'tis all right. We've got our friends and neighbors after all, and our children.

We gave it the name Westchester.

Rushton Land Grant map, from https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.blogspot.com/2020/06/rushton-land-grant-map.html

Part of Mary and John's land is now the Portapique River Wilderness Area - https://trailpeak.com/trails/6583

***Author's Note**: This is a work of fiction. Mary, John, and Hanness's thoughts and feelings come from my imagination. John was a documented saddler, but what his business was like is my imagination. I don't know whether they moved into New York City or stayed in Rye for the duration of the war, or went somewhere else. I inferred what their lives in Rye, New York City, and Nova Scotia were like based on factual information from the listed sources. Some of the Nova Scotia sources are not listed.*

FOOTNOTES

1. *Mary died 18 January 1822, making her 94 years old. Cumberland County Genealogies, John Rushton and Mary Coon, Westchester Township Book, Public Archives of Nova Scotia*

2. *Cumberland County Genealogies*

3. *Will of Hanness Coon, probated 28 April 1773, Record of Wills, 1665-1916; Index to Wills, 1662-1923 (New York County); Author: New York. Surrogate's Court (New York County); Probate Place: New York, New York, Ancestry.com*

4. *Pamela McGuire, Revolutionary Rye 250, The Stirrings of Resistance, Resistance Comes to Rye, presentation on 3 February 2026*

5. *Caleb Heathcote, Wikipedia*

6. *There is no evidence that confirms or refutes that Mary's father Hanness Coon is the same person as the Palatine orphan Hans ffellacoons who was apprenticed to Caleb Heathcote. The similarity of the names and the proximity of Scarsdale, where Caleb Heathcote lived; Rye, where Hanness Coon died and his grandson John Rushton Junior lived; and White Plains, where his son Jeremiah Coon owned land, suggest this possibility.*

7. *https://members.tripod.com/~David_Cooke/Roots/1763.htm - Jeremiah Coon, weaver, freeholder in the White Plains, 1763*

8. *Cumberland County Genealogies*

9. *A Muster Roll of the Men Raised and Passed Muster in the County of West Chester, for Captain William Gilchrist, his Company, April 30, 1759, p. 57, Westchester County, New York and the French & Indian Wars : 1755-1762, Ancestry.com*

10. *Will of Peter Rushton, probated 14 August 1767, New York, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999, New York County, District and Probate Courts, Ancestry.com*

11. *Muster Roll*

12. *Cumberland County Genealogies*

13. *Muster Roll*

14. *en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provincial_troops_in_the_French_and_Indian_Wars*

15. *Will of Hanness Coon.*
    - *https://www.grunge.com/493580/what-life-was-like-as-a-saddler-in-the-colonial-era/*
    - *https://www.history.com/articles/13-colonies-jobs*

16. *John Rushton, saddler, freeman, as juror, New York City. Court Minutes 1750–1751, 1750–1752, p. 372, Andrew Maverick vs. Thomas Pell, Family Search*

16. *John Rushton, saddler, freeman, as juror, New York City. Court Minutes 1750–1751, 1750–1752, p. 372, Andrew Maverick vs. Thomas Pell, Family Search*

17. *A Copy of the poll list of the election for representatives for the city and county of New York, 1768, Ancestry.com*

18. *Minty, Christopher, Loyalist Beginnings in New York, presentation at Putnam History Museum, 29 January 2026*

19. *McGuire, The Stirrings of Resistance*

20. *John Rushton, witness, mortgage of Jeremiah Coon, 1756, Westchester. Mortgages 1755–1774, Family Search John Rushton, witness, deed of Jonathan Purdy, 7 June 1759, Westchester Deeds 1715-1786, Family Search*

21. *Poll list*

22. *Minty, Loyalist Beginnings in New York*

23. *Minty*

24. *McGuire*

25. *Minty*

26. *Will of Hanness Coon*

27. *McGuire*

28. *https://www.grunge.com/493580/what-life-was-like-as-a-saddler-in-the-colonial-era/*

29. *McGuire*

30. *Dawson, Henry B., Westchester County, New York, during the American Revolution, 1886*

31. *McGuire*

32. *Minty*

33. *Dawson, p. 73*

34. *McGuire*

35. *Minty*

36. *Minty*

37. *McGuire*

38. *Minty*

39. *Burns, Brendan S. The Loyal and Doubtful, Index to the Acts of British Loyalism in the Greater New York and Long Island Area, Vol. 4. 2023. Rushton, Jeremiah. Oath of Fidelity to King George 1777*

40. *Minty*

41. *Minty, eight or ten raids a night. The specifics of what was done during the raids is my creation.*

42. *Minty*

43. *Minty*

44. *McGuire*

45. *Minty*

46. *https://www.newyorkalmanack.com/2023/08/british-occupation-new-york-city/*

47. *This story is completely made up by me.*

48. *Minty*

49. *Peter Richton in Poll Tax Records, 1791 - 1795, Census Returns, Assessments & Poll Tax Records, 1767 - 1838, Nova Scotia Archives*

50. *John Rushton, Mary Scolefield, Marriage, 1781, Hempstead, Queens, New York, Marriage ID2220298098, On microfilm at Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, Source The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record (quarterly), 1884, selected extracts, Publisher New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, New York, NY Page 79*
    - *Records of St. George's Church, Hempstead*
    - *Cumberland County Genealogies*
    - *Marriage records differ as to whether Mary was from Rye or Hempstead. Marriage records have Scolefield, Cumberland County genealogies have Colefield*

51. *Cumberland County Genealogies*

52. *Jeremiah Rushton, Memorial, Coldham, Peter Wilson, American (Loyalist) Migrations 1765-1799, p. 330*

53. *See my post on Jeremiah Rushton at grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/revolutionary-war-cowboy*

54. *Cumberland County Genealogies*

55. *Cumberland County Genealogies*

56. *Cumberland County Genealogies*

57. *Elizabeth Rushton as granddaughter in will of Hanness Coon*
    - *John Rushton didn't leave anything to Elizabeth in his will in 1799, so she must have died before then.*

58. *Will of John Rushton, proved 10 July 1800, Probate Records Old Wills: Cumberland. Probate Indexes 1789–1945, Familysearch*

59. *Minty*

60. *See my post on Jeremiah Rushton at grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/revolutionary-war-cowboy*

61. *Loyalists and Land Settlement in Nova Scotia, Ancestry.com, /search/collections/48452/records/353022?tid=26629049&pid=1884306141&ssrc=pt*

62. *John Richton in Poll Tax Records, 1791 - 1795, Census Returns, Assessments & Poll Tax Records, 1767 - 1838, Nova Scotia Archive*

Article shared from https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/my-5th-great-grandparents-mary-coon

Copyright 2026 Anne Wendel

1729–1789

Helene blogs at Letters from Labelle
https://lettersfromlabelle.substack.com

SCAN ME

PART 1: THE LEGENDARY LIFE OF PENNSYLVANIA & KENTUCKY FRONTIERSMAN JOHN HINKSON (1729–1789)

The Early Years in Colonial Pennsylvania (Cumberland County)

***Note**: This is the first installment of a multi-part story about my ancestor, John Hinkson. He was a Captain in the American Revolution, an influential pioneer in Kentucky's founding, and a notable frontiersman and woodsman in the "western frontier". I will be publishing his story in ten installments over the next several weeks.*

There is perhaps no single ancestor in all of my family tree who has been more documented and written about in the annals of early American history than my double ancestor, John Hinkson (1729–1789). He was, among other things:

- One of Kentucky's earliest explorers, who established the very first settlement in Kentucky's Bluegrass region in 1775.
- A skilled frontiersman and defender of the "western frontier" (i.e., the lands west of the Allegheny Mountains) who fought off numerous Indian attacks.
- A lieutenant and fierce fighter in Lord Dunmore's War of 1774.
- A Revolutionary War captain, a Kentucky Militia colonel, and the leader of "Hinkson's Rangers."
- One of only two escapees from the British and Indian attack (Captain Henry Bird's invasion of Kentucky) on Hinkson/Ruddell's Station in 1780.

RECORDED TALK

SCAN ME

- A contemporary and to friend of legendary frontiersmen Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton, George Rogers Clark, and the notorious renegade Simon Girty, with whom he interacted and knew well.
- A wanted man by the British colonial government for the killing of a Delaware Indian.
- A significant landowner and "improver" in Cumberland and Westmoreland Counties, PA, and Bourbon County, KY.
- A sheriff and a justice of the peace during the early establishment of Bourbon County in the 1780s.

... and ...

- The father of nine children, husband to Margaret "Peggy" McCracken, and the protector of the Hinkson family.

Never in all my family history research have I encountered so many documented discoveries and stories about a single ancestor. John Hinkson is mentioned in almost every Kentucky history book written before 1920. Furthermore, his name pops up all over the place in the field logs of American Revolution military officers and in the pension application depositions of the men who served under his command.

In fact, there are so many stories and findings to share that it's impossible to encapsulate them into even one very, very long chapter. As a result, what started out as merely a desire to learn more about my ancestor's role during the American Revolution quickly evolved into a full-blown book on his life. I found that once I started diving into John Hinkson's life, I couldn't stop writing his story until I had reached the end. I plan to publish this book later this year. In the meantime, I will be sharing the chapters over the next several weeks as early drafts and look forward to getting your feedback.

Without Bob's exceptional biography on our shared ancestor, it would have taken me years to manually research and compile much of this information.

AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

But before I dive into the many facets of John Hinkson's life and story, I need to acknowledge the research of my distant cousin, Robert "Bob" E. Francis. Without Bob's exceptional biography on our shared ancestor, it would have taken me years to manually research and compile much of this information. When Bob published his excellent biography on John Hinkson back in 2001, many genealogy records were not yet online. As a result, it often took years to complete

research manually, compared to today's instantaneous access to searchable full-text databases and AI enabled transcription of historical documents.

Our grants are next each other, on the road from Cumberland to London-Derry.62 Road! Hah! 'Twas a trail more like, just wide enough for a horse or a body to fit through the trees. A true wilderness. But 'twas a road all right after the wagons went through, back and forth with the belongings of 400 families. Our lot 'twas all trees, but 'tis a nice stream here. We farm it. 'Tisn't real fertile, like the land in Westchester County, and no city to sell in, but 'tis all right. We've got our friends and neighbors after all, and our children.

For those of you interested in Bob's exceptional research, I highly recommend A Biography of Col. John Hinkson: "Pennsylvania and Kentucky Frontiersman," frontierfolk.net/ramsha_research/jhinkson bio. html) Thank you again, Bob, for being so generous in publishing and sharing your research. I couldn't have asked for a better springboard to help expand on John Hinkson's remarkable story.

A Double Ancestor

To myself, my siblings, and my close cousins, John Hinkson has the distinction of being our double ancestor. He is both our 5x great-grandfather through his youngest son, Samuel Hinkson (1777–1837), and our 6x great-grandfather through his second oldest daughter, Margaret Hinkson (1770–1817), who married the American Revolution scout Thomas Ravenscraft (1756–1827). This "ancestor doubling" occurred the when John D. Hinkson, our 3x-great-grandfather, married Margaret Ewalt, his older first cousin's daughter. This 'first cousin, once removed' marriage merged two separate lines from John Hinkson together creating what genealogists call a "pedigree collapse."

This lineage chart shows the relationship through both lines that merge with the marriage of my 3x-great-grandparents, John and Margaret (Ewalt) Hinkson. John Hinkson and Margaret McCracken appear twice on this chart since they hold the distinction of being both my 5x great-grandparents (through their son Samuel) and my 6x great-grandparents (through daughter Margaret).

Genealogy chart showing the relationship of my maternal grandmother, Helen Hinkson to John Hinkson, who through the marriage of my 3x great-grandparents (1st cousin once removed) is both my 5x and 6x great-grandfather.

I don't think this double ancestor situation is all that unique among family trees that have branches with deep colonial ties. As families often stayed in the same location over several generations, it was fairly common for second and third cousins to marry each other. Oftentimes, they may have had no knowledge that they were actually related, especially if the relationship was at the third-cousin level or greater.

But in this case, I believe that both John and Margaret were aware of the connection. John would have been 25 when his grandmother Margaret McCracken Hinkson passed away in 1829. Margaret Ewalt was 16 when her great-grandmother (and namesake) passed. The young couple was married on January 25, 1828, a full year before their collective grandmother/great-grandmother, Margaret Hinkson, died in April 1829.

The Cumberland Years

John Hinkson (1729–1789) was about fifteen years of age when his father, John, died around 1744. Not much is known about his father other than a few small details. John Hinkson (the father) was born in Ulster, Ireland (in present-day Northern Ireland) around 1704. He married Agnes Elizabeth O'Neill (1710–1766) in Tyrone, Ulster, Ireland, in 1728 and shortly afterwards sailed to the British colonies to begin a new life with his bride (and possibly his firstborn son).

I don't know much about John (the father), but I suspect he was not the firstborn son of his father. Land rights in Ireland during the 1700s were typically only passed down to the firstborn son. It is likely John (the father) immigrated to the colonies for a chance at land ownership and prosperity, or perhaps the couple left Ulster to avoid religious persecution. The 1720s and 1730s in Northern Ireland were known as the "Penal Laws era" and the "Age of Dissent." During this time, Catholics were stripped of their rights and land through penal laws, and Presbyterians who dissented against the imposed Church of Ireland laws and related doctrine were also severely discriminated against. As a result, it is estimated that roughly 200,000 Scotch-Irish left Ulster for the colonies between 1717 and 1775. Among them were John and Agnes Hinkson.

When the couple arrived in the colonies, they settled in the then-undefined territory of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. This was known essentially as Indian land. "Squatters' rights" were the rule and land warrants (when applicable) were easy to obtain.

Since I was unable to verify any land warrants registered by John Hinkson (the father), I assume he was among the large number of Scotch-Irish squatters who settled throughout the "new frontier" west of the Susquehanna River. By the 1770s, the Hinkson family was living near Hopewell Township within the large county. In this early map of the British Province of Pennsylvania, the Hopewell area is highlighted (in yellow) as well as the boundary of the Susquehanna River (in Blue). This river served as the eastern border of the "frontier" before 1760.

Map of Pennsylvania created 1770 for the Penn brothers, Thomas and Richard Penn (sons of William Penn) and shows the expanse of western Pennsylvania that the brothers desired to control. (Map: Library of Congress)

What is interesting to note from this 1770 map is not only how large the area of Cumberland County was, but the complete absence of any western or northern borders for the province. Since the frontier was an active point of dispute and contention between the tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy and the British colonial government, Scotch-Irish settlers (who were basically viewed as second-class citizens compared to "true Brits") were encouraged to settle on land west of the Susquehanna River in an effort to apply more pressure in future treaty negotiations.

The establishment of local militias and the building of protective blockhouses and forts were essential for pioneer families to survive under such risky conditions.

The immigrants who settled in western Pennsylvania did so with little to no support from the British colonial government. Living and surviving on the frontier west of the Susquehanna River came with many requirements, risks, and dangers. Settlers had to clear their own lands, build their own homes, and grow and procure their own food. But perhaps the most important precursor to their survival in the west was devising a means to protect themselves against frequent raids and attacks from hostile Indians. The establishment of local militias and the building of protective blockhouses and forts were essential for pioneer families to survive under such risky conditions.

John Hinkson (the frontiersman) was born in 1729 and grew up on the frontier in an environment of constant unrest and risk. This unrest was further fueled when the Penn family negotiated the "Walking Purchase," in 1737, which tricked the Lenape/Delaware tribes into ceding over 1,200,000 acres (1,875 square miles) of their hunting grounds to the Pennsylvania province. This "purchase" deeply embittered the Lenape against the colonists and laid the groundwork for the savage attacks and violent clashes between Indians and settlers would engulf the western frontier (western Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky) for the next several decades.

Sometime in 1748 or 1749, John (the frontiersman) lost his father. Shortly afterwards, in 1750, his mother Agnes married John McCune, a family friend who had also been widowed. John Hinkson (the frontiersman) was close with all three McCune boys (John, James, and Robert), who were around his same age. After his mother's marriage to John McCune, the couple welcomed a new son, William, in 1751. As John Hinkson's half-brother, the two men would become very close in adulthood.

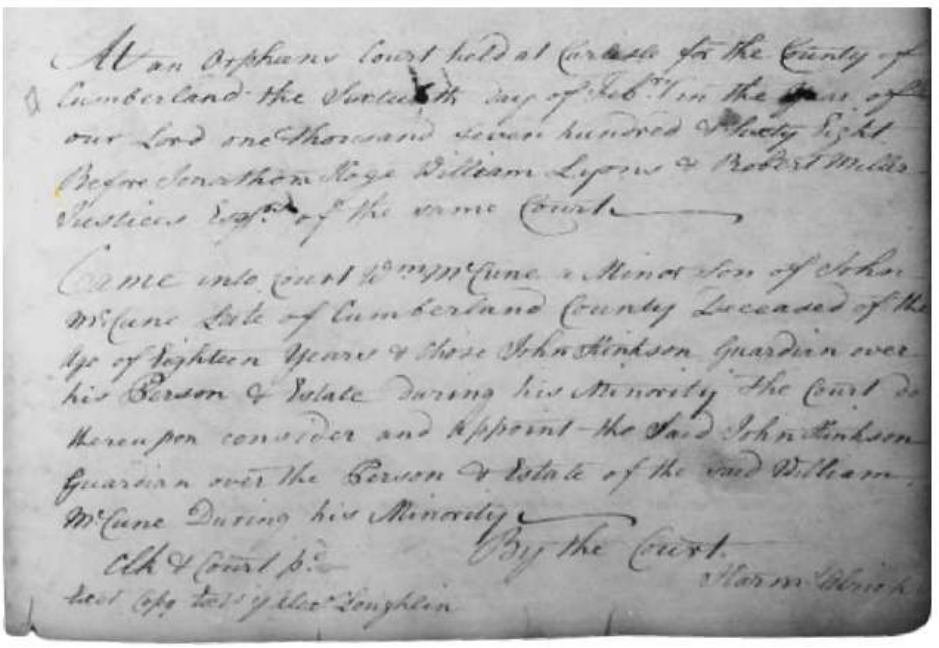


Image of court record from 16 February 1768 where William McCune asks the Orphans Court to appoint his half-brother John Hinkson as his legal guardian of his "person and estate" until age 21. (Image: Familysearch.com, Cumberland Court Dockets 1751-1804 #005534159)

> *At an Orphans Court held at Carlisle for the County of Cumberland the Sixteenth day of Feb'ry in the year of our Lord One thousand Seven hundred & Sixty Eight Before Jonathon Hoge William Lyon & Robert Miller Justices Esqrs of the same Court.*
>
> *Came into Court Wm McCune a Minor Son of John McCune Late of Cumberland County Deceased of the Age of Eighteen Years & chose John Hinkson Guardian over his Person & Estate during his Minority. The Court do thereupon consider and Appoint the Said John Hinkson Guardian over the Person & Estate of the said William McCune During his Minority.*
>
> *By the Court , Harm Alrich*

John and William remained very close for the remainder of their lives. Later in life, they settled in Westmoreland County together, and they also explored and eventually settled in Kentucky together. The land that they warranted and purchased was often adjacent to one another. As half-brothers, they appear to have been "whole family" throughout their entire lives.

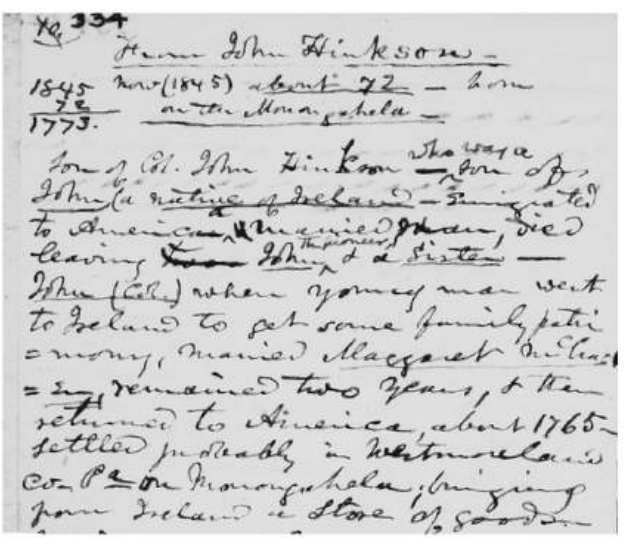
To Ireland to collect Patrimony

Much of what we know about John Hinkson's (the frontiersman) early life comes from an interview recorded in 1845 between John's son, John Jr. (technically John III), and Lyman Draper. For family historians of early frontier settlers, the Draper Manuscripts—which Lyman Draper created through his interviews with colonial citizens and American Revolution patriots—are a goldmine.

Lyman Copeland Draper was a true student of history who spent a great portion of his adult life traveling and interviewing individuals who had been involved in the settlement of the frontier. He had plans to write several books about the history of the trans-Allegheny West, but his dreams never materialized. When he died, he willed all his research papers and hundreds of notebooks full of interview notes to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (where he had worked). At a massive 491 assembled volumes, the collection is the largest of its kind, covering frontier activity from the period of the French and Indian War (1754–1763) to the War of 1812. Fortunately for me, Draper interviewed not only John Hinkson Jr. about his father, but also several others who knew John Hinkson (the frontiersman) well.

On Hinkson's early life, Draper's notes recorded this statement about his departure for Ireland sometime early in his adulthood:

> *From John Hinkson - now (1845) about 72 – "...born on the Monongahela. Son of Col. John Hinkson - who was a son of John (a native of Ireland) - emigrated to America a married man, died leaving John the pioneer [aka the frontiersman] and a sister. John (Col.) when young man went to Ireland to get some family patrimony, married Margaret McCracken, remained two years, & then returned to America, about 1765 - settled probably in Westmoreland Co. Pa on Monongahela, bringing from Ireland a store of goods.*


Xq 334
From John Hinkson –
1845 now (1845) about 72 – born
72
1773. on the Monongahela –
Son of Col. John Hinkson who was a Son of
John (a native of Ireland) – emigrated
to America a married man, died
leaving John the pioneer and a sister –
John (Col.) when young man went
to Ireland to get some family patri
= mony, married Margaret McCrac
= ken remained two years, & then
returned to America about 1765 –
settled probably in Westmoreland
Co. Pa on Monongahela, bringing
from Ireland a Store of goods

Lyman Draper's original notes regarding Col. John Hinkson taken during his interview with Hinkson's son, John Hinkson Jr. in 1845. (Draper MSS 2S 334)

There is little information about John Hinkson's life before he returned from Ireland in 1765. As the Hinkson name was fairly common in Northern Ireland, it has been difficult for me to narrow down the specific relative from whom John Hinkson would have collected his inheritance. My guess is that his grandfather passed away, leaving land to his oldest living male relative. Since John's father had passed away in 1748/49, any inheritance would have passed to John; hence his trip back to Ulster.

What we do know from John Jr.'s interview with Draper in 1845 is that his father met and married Margaret "Peggy" McCracken in Ireland. In my research, I was also unable to uncover any marriage records for the couple. However, this is not unusual for the time, as most Presbyterian religious gatherings were conducted quietly in Ulster. The Anglican Church (the Church of Ireland) still marginalized Presbyterian believers and considered them to be "dissenters."

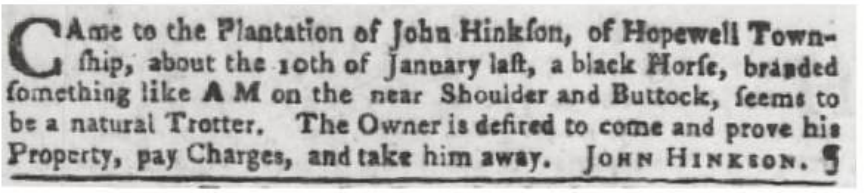
Shortly after John's marriage to Peggy, the couple sailed to America with what John Jr. called a "store of goods." I suspect that John Hinkson may have also paid for the passage of another individual to return with him and his bride to America, as tax records a few years later show that he had a "servant." This is an interesting fact that I'll dive into more in just a bit. But first, I'd like to explore some findings related to John Hinkson's ownership of land within the province of Pennsylvania, Cumberland County.

A Promise of 300 Acres West of the Susquehanna

The first land-ownership record I have found for John Hinkson relates to his 300 acres recorded in the "West Side Applications" on November 10, 1766. The West Side Application records are tied to the Penn brothers and the British Crown, who realized around 1765 that they were missing out on thousands of pounds in taxes.

Prior to 1766, the thousands of Scotch-Irish and German immigrants who had settled west of the Susquehanna River had been, essentially, squatters on the land for free. Many had lived there for more than a decade and had made significant improvements, such as clearing land, planting crops, and building roads. At first, the colonial government had encouraged the squatting as a means to settle and take ownership of the "Walking Purchase" territory. But as more settlers flocked to the frontier, the colonial government realized that they didn't have a way to collect taxes and land fees. To solve the problem, the Penn brothers opened a land office and allowed anyone to claim up to 300 acres by simply describing the land where they were already living.

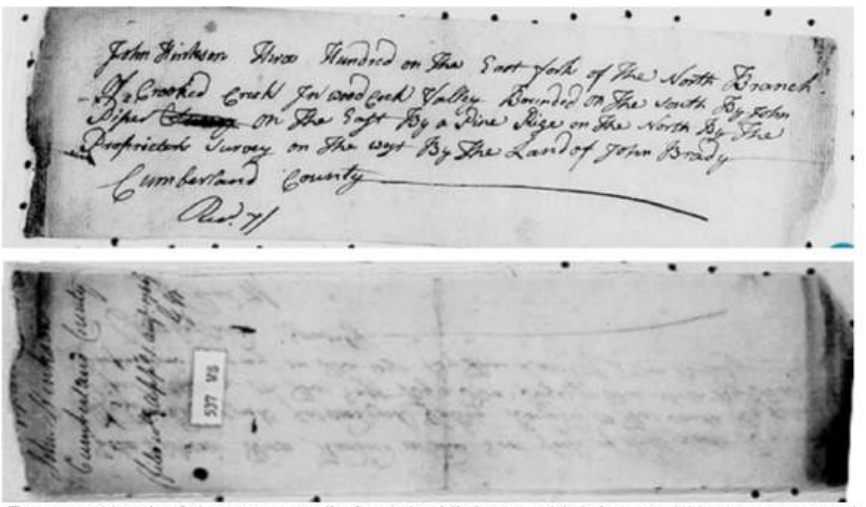
From this discovery in the Pennsylvania Gazette (Benjamin Franklin's newspaper) in March 1765, it appears as though John Hinkson had not only been squatting on a sizable "plantation" before the West Side Application process was initiated, but that he was also an honest man. This newspaper item notes his search for the owner of a black horse that had wandered onto his property in Hopewell Township.



CAme to the Plantation of John Hinkſon, of Hopewell Township, about the 10th of January laſt, a black Horſe, brānded ſomething like A M on the near Shoulder and Buttock, ſeems to be a natural Trotter. The Owner is deſired to come and prove his Property, pay Charges, and take him away. JOHN HINKSON.

John Hinkson's newspaper notice for the owner of a horse that had wandered into his property. The Pennsylvania Gazette, March 21, 1765, pg. 4.

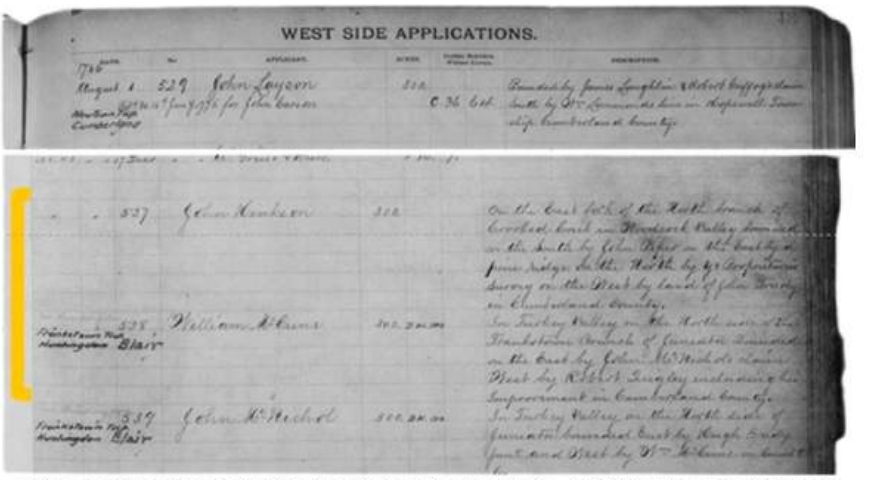
To claim the land that settlers like John Hinkson had been living on and improving, "warrants" were submitted to the newly established West Side Application office that described where the settler's claim was located. Here is the actual warrant slip for the 300 acres on which John Hinkson had been squatting:



Front and back of the warrant slip for John Hinkson, which he would have presented to the Land Office for recording. Slip is dated 1 August 1766 on back. (Image: FamilySearch.org Application for Warrants Pennsylvania #008707323)

When John Hinkson submitted his claim, he did so with his half-brother, William McCune, by his side. The fact that John Hinkson's West Side claim is recorded in the books directly above William McCune's indicates that the brothers registered their claims together. Here are the land descriptions entered for both men's claims as they appear in the West Side Application record book. The land description for John a Hinkson's claim recorded in West Application book is identical to the handwriting from the small warrant slip above.

> *John Hinkson - "On the East fork of the North branch of Crooked Creek in Woodcock Valley; bounded on the South by John Piper; on the East by a pine ridge; on the North by the Proprietaries Survey; on the West by land of John Brady in Cumberland County."*
>
> *William McCune - "In Turkey Valley on the North side of the Frankstown Branch of Juniata [River]; Bounded on the East by John McNichols claim; West by Robert Quigley including his Improvement in Cumberland County."*



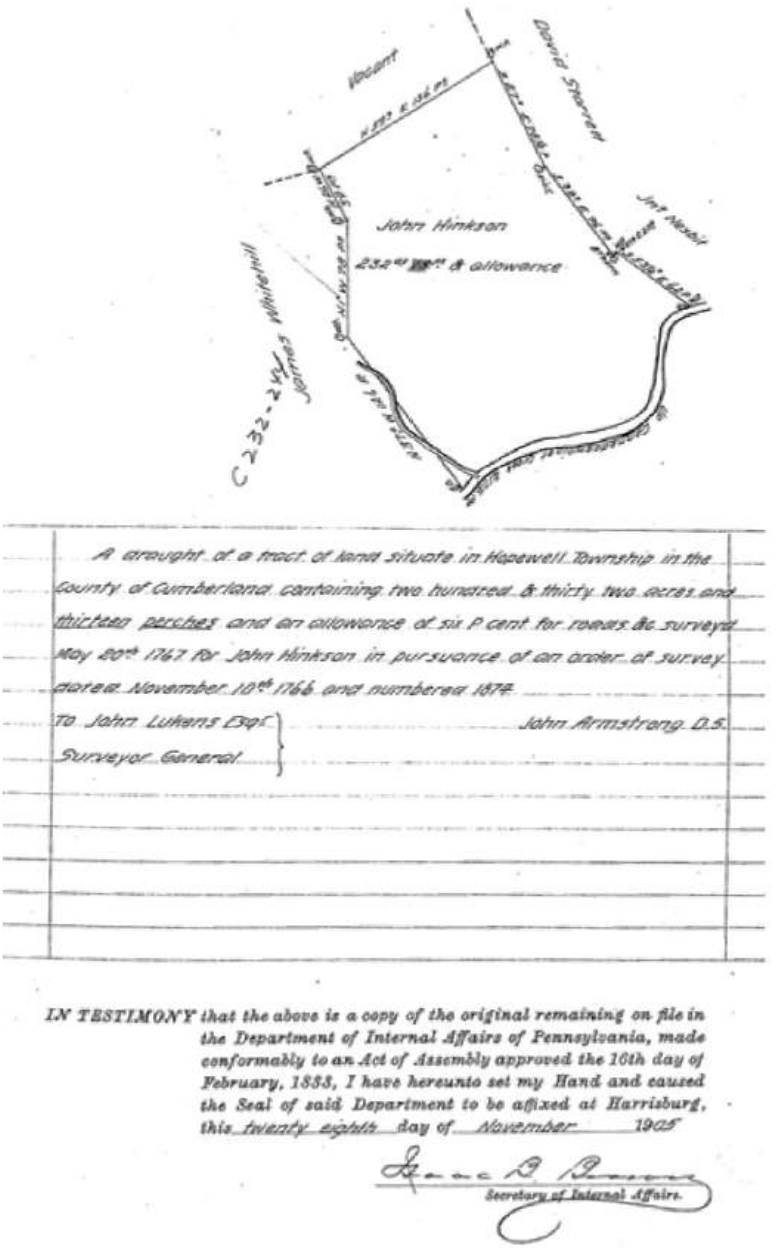
This page from West Application Book dated August 1, 1766 shows John Hinkson's claim entered just above William McCune's claim (Image: Familysearch.org, West Side Applications Pennsylvania #008549848)

Although William at the time was not yet 21 (technically, he was eighteen), I believe that if he had been asked, he lied about his age. The land that he registered was most likely the original home site where he and his mother had been living. Since his father, John McCune, had died earlier in 1766, William was the sole male still living there.

At the time of the recording, both brothers' claims were located in Hopewell Township. Later, Hopewell would be split up to form Newton and Frankstown Townships (among others); hence the left margin notes added later to the application book. The location of the claims today can be found about 40 miles southwest of Penn State University (State College, PA), near Williamsburg, PA.

This page from West Application Book dated August 1, 1766 shows John Hinkson's claim entered just above William McCune's claim (Image: Familysearch.org, West Side Applications Pennsylvania #008549848)

Land records show that once John's survey was completed on May 20, 1767, his total land measured 232 acres. This 1905 copy of the original land survey, available through the Pennsylvania State Archives, shows the boundaries of John Hinkson's land along Conodoguinet Creek and notes his neighbors.



A draught of a tract of land situate in Hopewell Township in the County of Cumberland containing two hundred & thirty two acres and thirteen perches and an allowance of six P cent for roads &c surveyd May 20th 1767 for John Hinkson in pursuance of an order of survey dated 10th November 1766 and numbered 1874

To John Lukens Esqr Surveyor General

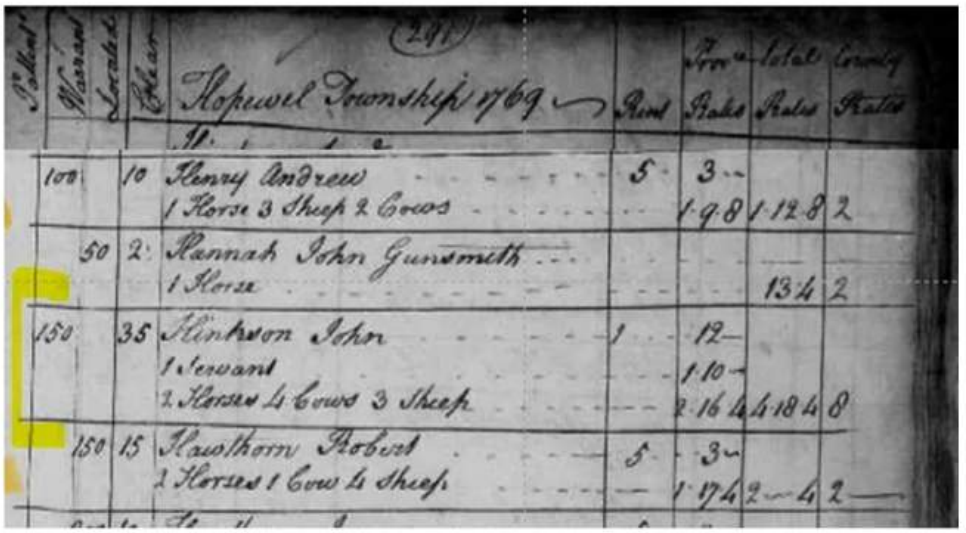
John Armstrong D.S.

IN TESTIMONY that the above is a copy of the original remaining on file in the Department of Internal Affairs of Pennsylvania, made conformably to an Act of Assembly approved the 16th day of February, 1853, I have hereunto set my Hand and caused the Seal of said Department to be affixed at Harrisburg, this twenty eighth day of November 1905

Secretary of Internal Affairs.

A copy of the original survey created in 1905 from the Cumberland County land record books.

The 1769 tax records for John Hinkson fill in a few more gaps regarding his claim. Although John's survey measured 232 acres, it seems the practice at the time was to only tax undeveloped land in 50-acre allotments. This tax record from 1769 shows John having approximately 150 undeveloped acres and 35 cleared acres.



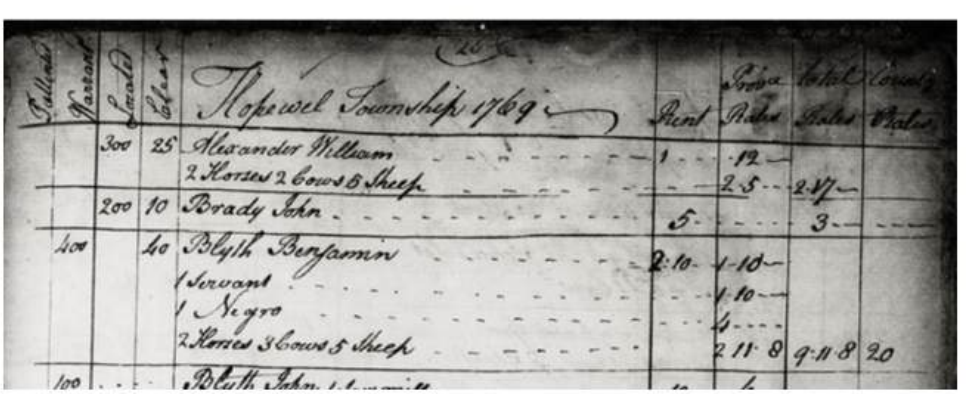
Hopewell Township 1769

Tax	Warrant	Locate	Name	Rent	Prop. Rates	Total Rates	County Rates
100		10	Henry Andrew	5	3		
			1 Horse 3 Sheep 2 Cows		1 9 8	1 12 8	2
	50	2	Hannah John Gunsmith				
			1 Horse			13 4	2
150		35	Hinkson John	1	12		
			1 Servant		1 10		
			2 Horses 4 Cows 3 Sheep		2 16 4	4 18 4	8
	150	15	Hawthorn Robert	5	3		
			2 Horses 1 Cow 4 Sheep		1 17 4	2 — 4	2 —

1769 Tax record from Cumberland County for John Hinkson (Image: composite screen shots from 1769 Tax book found on FamilySearch.org)

There are several things that are very interesting about John Hinkson's tax records. From them, we not only know the approximate size of the developed land in John's claim, we also learn how much livestock he owned, as well as the fact that he had one servant.

When I first discovered this record, I immediately assumed that John Hinkson might have been a slave owner. But as I dug further into the Hopewell Township tax records, I discovered that "servants" were recorded differently from enslaved people. Enslaved Black people were taxed at a rate of 4 pounds. Indentured servants (who typically worked five years to pay off their passage to America) were only taxed at 1 pound and 10 shillings. This tax record from another Hopewell Township neighbor, Benjamin Blythe, who had both a "servant" and a "negro", shows the distinction between the two. Slavery in Pennsylvania was not abolished until 1780, eleven years after the recording of these tax records.



Hopewell Township 1769

Tax	Warrant	Locate	Name	Rent	Prop. Rates	Total Rates	County Rates
	300	25	Alexander William	1	12		
			2 Horses 2 Cows 5 Sheep		2 5	2 17	
	200	10	Brady John	5		3	
400		40	Blyth Benjamin	2 10	1 10		
			1 Servant		1 10		
			1 Negro		4		
			2 Horses 3 Cows 5 Sheep		2 11 8	9 11 8	20
100			Blyth John		4		

Tax records for another Hopewell Township citizen, Benjamin Blyth, note the difference in tax rates between a "servant" and a "negro" slave (image: Familysearch.org, Hopewell Township Tax records 1769)

As I suspected earlier in this chapter, I believe John Hinkson's "servant" was indentured and working to pay off a debt that was the result of Hinkson paying for their passage from Northern Ireland to America in 1765. Beyond 1769, I cannot find any other tax records that indicate Hinkson still had a servant, so I assume the indentured individual paid off their debt to Hinkson within five years.

If you're curious about the details in the tax record, here's a breakdown of John Hinkson's 1769 tax to the colonial government. In today's dollars (2026), his total tax would be the equivalent of approximately $1,300. This high amount makes it easy to understand why colonial citizens were upset with British rule that allowed "taxation without representation." It's also interesting to note that taxes for both the province (Pennsylvania) and the county (Cumberland) were levied by the British government.

Tax Record: John Hinkson (1769)

Category	Value / Count	Tax Rate (Provincial)
Warranted Land	150 Acres	£1
Cleared Land	35 Acres	12s
Servant	1	£1.10
Livestock	2 Horses, 4 Cows, 3 Sheep	£2.16.4
Total Provincial Rate	—	**£4.18.4**
County Rate	—	**8s**

Breakdown of John Hinkson's tax record for 1769.

But it wasn't the taxes that had frontiersmen and their families most concerned about their livelihoods. It was the constant risk they faced from attacks by angry and disgruntled Indians.

Unrest and Frequent Attacks

The twenty-five years following the start of the French and Indian War were perhaps the most dangerous period of colonial America. Settlers in western Pennsylvania, western Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky endured frequent raids, the destruction of their homes and crops, captivity, and all too frequently, death or being scalped alive.

In 1755, when British General Braddock was defeated by the French and their allied Indians at the Battle of the Monongahela (approx. 12 miles east of present-day Pittsburgh), he retreated, abandoning settlers like John Hinkson and exposing families throughout western Pennsylvania to savage violence and displacement.

For the next nine years, the British would fight the French and their allied Indians over a conflict that began as a result of territorial disputes in the Ohio River Valley. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 saw the French cede their land claims in the area to the British, but that didn't stop the settlers conflict with the Indians. In many cases, it actually made it worse.

Pontiac's War (1763–1766), which followed the French and Indian War, brought more savagery to the settlers living in Cumberland County, including the Hinkson and McCune families. Unfortunately, this period of Pennsylvania's early settlement is full of hundreds of small and large-scale tragedies that were the result of conflicts with the Indians. Here are a few of the most notable ones that occurred within the area where the Hinkson and McCune families lived during the eleven years that encompassed both wars:

- **Great Cove Massacre** (November 1, 1755): This attack by nearly 100 Shawnee and Lenape (Delaware) warriors killed approximately 50 settlers living in the Great Cove and nearby Conolloways settlements. This area was approximately 40 miles southwest of Hopewell Township, where the Hinkson family lived.
- **Enoch Brown School Massacre** (July 26, 1764): This event happened just south of Hopewell. Three Delaware Indians attacked a log cabin schoolhouse while Enoch Brown was teaching his young students. Eleven settlers died (one adult and ten children). Only one child, Archie McCullough, survived the horrendous killing and scalping.
- **Cumberland County Raids of 1763–1765**: During the height of Pontiac's War, historical accounts indicate that "hundreds of settlers" died across the western Pennsylvania frontier as Shawnee and Lenape warriors engaged in coordinated attacks. Thousands of settlers fled and were displaced as a result of attacks that burned their homes and crops and killed family and neighbors.

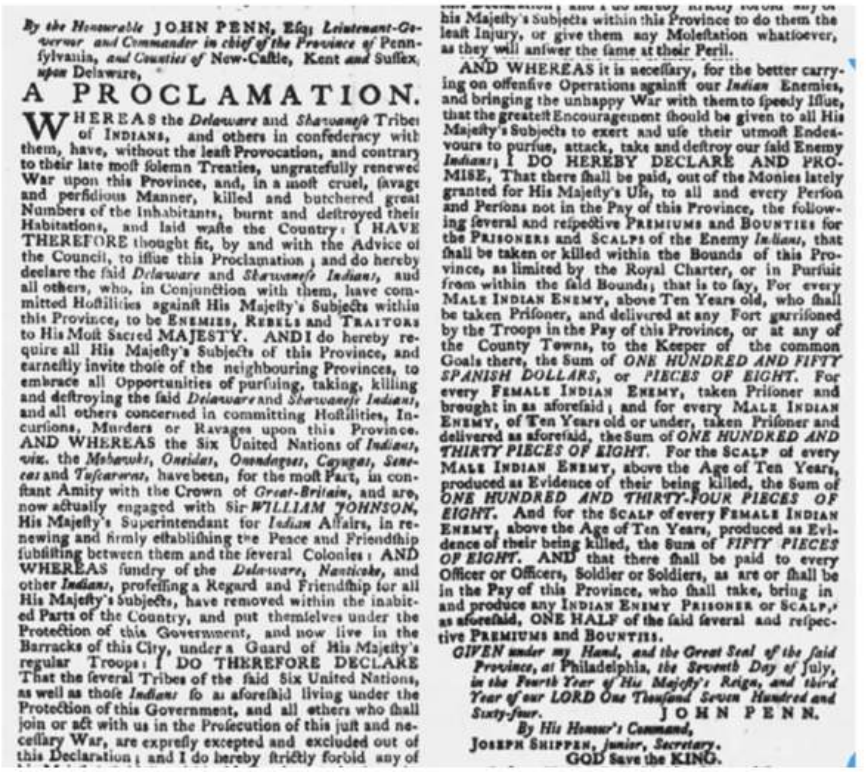
Historical scholars estimate that approximately 2,000 settlers were killed or captured during the three-year period (1763–1766) of Pontiac's War. Between the French and Indian War and Pontiac's War, the western frontier of Pennsylvania shifted dramatically from a place of frontier settlement to a full-blown war zone characterized by frequent and coordinated raids on forts and homesteads. To survive in these conditions, settlers had to band together and fight back fiercely.

A Bounty for Scalps

What made the conflict between Indians and colonial settlers especially heinous was the practice by both the French and British governments of paying bounties for scalps. The scalps of the enemy from both sides of the conflict were heavily incentivized by government-sanctioned payments that put innocent settlers at the center of the divide.

During the French and Indian War, Pierre-François de Rigaud (Governor of New France) sanctioned the reward for British and colonists scalps to incentivize Indian allies to engage in guerrilla-style raids against the settlers.

Many British colonies - among them Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania - retaliated by issuing the same for the scalps of Indians. The Pennsylvania Scalp Act of 1756 authorized the payment for scalps of Indian men and women, and also provided a bounty for any Indian children returned as prisoners. The Act was as horrific as the French incentive decree, further making innocent settlers pawns in a politically driven global war. After the Enoch Brown School Massacre in 1764, Governor John Penn of Pennsylvania reintroduced the Scalp Act as a reaction to the massacre with this proclamation:



By the Honourable JOHN PENN, Eſq; *Lieutenant-Governor and Commander in chief of the Province of* Pennſylvania, *and Counties of* New-Caſtle, Kent *and* Suſſex, *upon* Delaware,

A PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS the *Delaware* and *Shawaneſe* Tribes of INDIANS, and others in confederacy with them, have, without the leaſt Provocation, and contrary to their late moſt ſolemn Treaties, ungratefully renewed War upon this Province, and, in a moſt cruel, ſavage and perfidious Manner, killed and butchered great Numbers of the Inhabitants, burnt and deſtroyed their Habitations, and laid waſte the Country: I HAVE THEREFORE thought fit, by and with the Advice of the Council, to iſſue this Proclamation; and do hereby declare the ſaid *Delaware* and *Shawaneſe Indians*, and all others, who, in Conjunction with them, have committed Hoſtilities againſt His Majeſty's Subjects within this Province, to be ENEMIES, REBELS and TRAITORS to His Moſt Sacred MAJESTY. AND I do hereby require all His Majeſty's Subjects of this Province, and earneſtly invite thoſe of the neighbouring Provinces, to embrace all Opportunities of purſuing, taking, killing and deſtroying the ſaid *Delaware* and *Shawaneſe Indians*, and all others concerned in committing Hoſtilities, Incurſions, Murders or Ravages upon this Province. AND WHEREAS the Six United Nations of *Indians*, *viz.* the *Mohawks*, *Oneidas*, *Onondagoes*, *Cayugas*, *Senecas* and *Tuſcaroras*, have been, for the moſt Part, in conſtant Amity with the Crown of *Great-Britain*, and are, now actually engaged with Sir *WILLIAM JOHNSON*, His Majeſty's Superintendant for *Indian* Affairs, in renewing and firmly eſtabliſhing the Peace and Friendſhip ſubſiſting between them and the ſeveral Colonies: AND WHEREAS ſundry of the *Delaware*, *Nanticoke*, and other *Indians*, profeſſing a Regard and Friendſhip for all His Majeſty's Subjects, have removed within the inhabited Parts of the Country, and put themſelves under the Protection of this Government, and now live in the Barracks of this City, under a Guard of His Majeſty's regular Troops: I DO THEREFORE DECLARE That the ſeveral Tribes of the ſaid Six United Nations, as well as thoſe *Indians* ſo as aforeſaid living under the Protection of this Government, and all others who ſhall join or act with us in the Proſecution of this juſt and neceſſary War, are expreſly excepted and excluded out of this Declaration; and I do hereby ſtrictly forbid any of his Majeſty's Subjects within this Province to do them the leaſt Injury, or give them any Moleſtation whatſoever, as they will anſwer the ſame at their Peril.

AND WHEREAS it is neceſſary, for the better carrying on offenſive Operations againſt our *Indian* Enemies, and bringing the unhappy War with them to ſpeedy Iſſue, that the greateſt Encouragement ſhould be given to all His Majeſty's Subjects to exert and uſe their utmoſt Endeavours to purſue, attack, take and deſtroy our ſaid Enemy *Indians*; I DO HEREBY DECLARE AND PROMISE, That there ſhall be paid, out of the Monies lately granted for His Majeſty's Uſe, to all and every Perſon and Perſons not in the Pay of this Province, the following ſeveral and reſpective PREMIUMS and BOUNTIES for the PRISONERS and SCALPS of the Enemy *Indians*, that ſhall be taken or killed within the Bounds of this Province, as limited by the Royal Charter, or in Purſuit from within the ſaid Bounds; that is to ſay, For every MALE INDIAN ENEMY, above Ten Years old, who ſhall be taken Priſoner, and delivered at any Fort garriſoned by the Troops in the Pay of this Province, or at any of the County Towns, to the Keeper of the common Goals there, the Sum of *ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY SPANISH DOLLARS*, or *PIECES OF EIGHT*. For every FEMALE INDIAN ENEMY, taken Priſoner and brought in as aforeſaid; and for every MALE INDIAN ENEMY, of Ten Years old or under, taken Priſoner and delivered as aforeſaid, the Sum of *ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY PIECES OF EIGHT*. For the SCALP of every MALE INDIAN ENEMY, above the Age of Ten Years, produced as Evidence of their being killed, the Sum of *ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOUR PIECES OF EIGHT*. And for the SCALP of every FEMALE INDIAN ENEMY, above the Age of Ten Years, produced as Evidence of their being killed, the Sum of *FIFTY PIECES OF EIGHT*. AND that there ſhall be paid to every Officer or Officers, Soldier or Soldiers, as are or ſhall be in the Pay of this Province, who ſhall take, bring in and produce any INDIAN ENEMY PRISONER or SCALP, as aforeſaid, ONE HALF of the ſaid ſeveral and reſpective PREMIUMS and BOUNTIES.

GIVEN under my Hand, and the Great Seal of the ſaid Province, at Philadelphia, *the Seventh Day of* July, *in the Fourth Year of His Majeſty's Reign, and in the Year of our LORD One Thouſand Seven Hundred and Sixty-four.* JOHN PENN.

By His Honour's Command,
JOSEPH SHIPPEN, *junior, Secretary.*
GOD Save the KING.

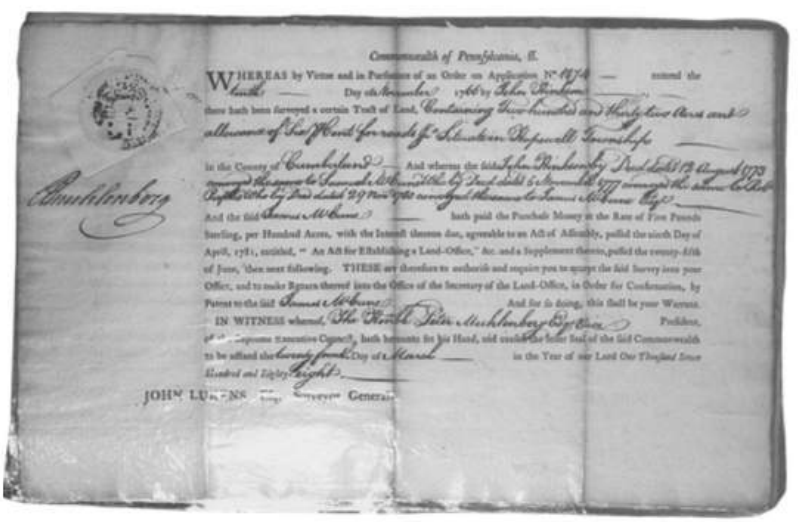
John Penn's 1764 Scalp Proclamation, The Pennsylvania Gazette, July 12, 1764, pg. 1

This environment of war was the tumultuous and dangerous setting in which Scotch-Irish immigrants who had lived on the western frontier for years found themselves. The Hinksons and McCunes, who had moved to the area in the 1730s and 1740s, were not quick to abandon their life's investment. They had descended from fierce Scottish and Irish stock that had fought for their freedom in the Scottish Jacobite uprisings and the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland just a generation or two before. They were not of the mindset to give up ground easily, even if it meant living with constant danger.

Although I could find no documentation, I am 99% sure that both men were actively involved in a local Hopewell Township militia. The building of fortified blockhouses that could house several families at a time was very common in the area. In times of high alert and frequent raids on the area, families would seek shelter together in these defensive structures.

The Move to Westmoreland County

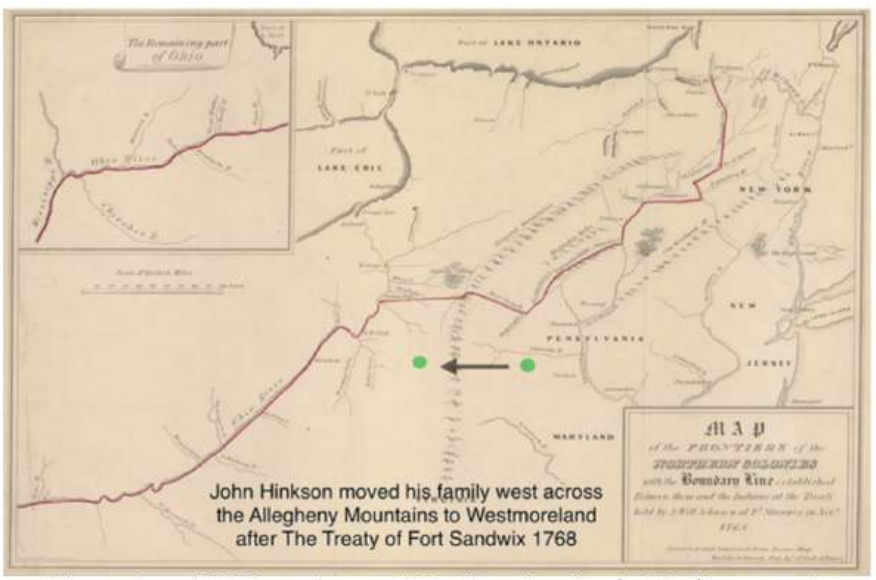
Regardless of all the risks and dangers inherent to living on the western frontier in the 1760s and 1770s, John Hinkson sought another move further west once land west of the Allegheny Mountains was opened to settlers. Westmoreland County, part of the "New Purchase," was formed following the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix with the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. Not long after its signing, John Hinkson made moves to relocate his family to this new territory by first selling off his land in Hopewell Township, Cumberland County. This deed document records the transfer of John Hinkson's land to his half-uncle Samuel McCune on August 13, 1773, after which it was later transferred to James McCune in 1777.



Cumberland County, PA land deed transfer noting John Hinkson as the original deed owner of 232 acres in Hopewell Township acquired November 10, 1776. On August 12, 1773 John Hinkson sold this land to Samuel McCune (Cumberland County PA land records, FamilySearch.org)

In 1773, John Hinkson moved his family over the Allegheny Mountains to the newly formed Westmoreland County, seeking greater prosperity and opportunity for his family (in the form of land). By that year, his household consisted of eight members: himself, his wife Peggy, and six children under the age of ten.

This map from 1768 shows the established boundary line (red) between the Colonies and the six nations of the Iroquois Confederacy agreed to in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix. I've added notation showing the general location that John Hinkson moved his family when he left his land in Cumberland County for new opportunities in the newly opened lands west of the Allegheny Mountains. Here the family would live for the next few years. But rather than finding opportunity, John Hinkson would find himself at the center of a new colonial controversy and conflict.


John Hinkson moved his family west across the Allegheny Mountains to Westmoreland after The Treaty of Fort Sandwix 1768
M A P
Boundary Line

This map from 1768 shows the established boundary line (red line) between the colonies and Six Nations of the Iroquois. I've added an arrow and notes showing the move for John Hinkson's family in 1773. (Map: EncyclopediaVirginia.org)

» *Stay tuned for the next chapter,* **The Westmoreland Years.**

This next chapter of John Hinkson's story will cover his service as a lieutenant in Lord Dunmore's War, the Hannas Town Resolutions, and the killing of a Delaware Indian that put him at the center of a colonial governor conflict. There's so much more to share about this legendary ancestor... so stay tuned!

Article shared from https://lettersfromlabelle.substack.com/p/part-1-the-legendary-life-of-pennsylvania

SCAN ME

Find all the chapters of his incredible story and journey at https://lettersfromlabelle.substack.com/t/jhinkson

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Helene McClanahan

HEATHER ROJO

1730–1800

JONATHAN FLINT OF READING, MASSACHUSETTS

My Revolutionary War Patriots

Heather blogs at Nutfield Genalogy https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com since 2009 and more recently on Substack at nutfieldgenealogy.

SCAN ME

My 5th great grandfather Jonathan Flint was born on 11 August 1730 in Reading, Massachusetts, the son of Jonathan Flint (b. 1689) and Mary Collston Hart. Mary was the daughter of Elizabeth Collston, who was only 16 when she was accused of being a witch during the 1692 witchcraft hysteria. She was arrested along with her mother, Mary Duston Collston, and grandmother, Lydia Dustin. Lydia died in prison in Cambridge, Massachusetts before being exhonorated. Elizabeth escaped twice, once from the Cambridge prison, and a second time while being transported to the courthouse in Charlestown.

On 1 August 1751 Jonathan Flint married Lydia Proctor in Salem, Massachusetts. By coincidence, Lydia was the great granddaughter of John Proctor who was hanged as a witch in 1692. John Proctor was the protagonist in the famous play "The Crucible" written by Arthur

Miller. Lydia had several relatives involved with the witch hysteria, including the grandparents William Buckley and Sarah Smith. Her grandmother Sarah was arrested on 14 May 1692 for witchcraft and imprisoned. Two pastors spoke to her innocence, but she still spent eight months in prison until found not guilty in January 1693.

Jonathan and Lydia had eight children between 1751 and 1767. They lived in North Reading, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, not far from Lexington and Concord. When the alarm rang out for the British regulars attacking Lexington on 19 April 1775 Jonathan was 44 years old. As a corporal in Captain John Batchelder's Company, his militia responded to the alarm and marched towards Lexington. The company arrived after the battle, but Jonathan re-enlisted again in 1776. The musket he used in the American Revolution was supposed to be preserved in the collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society, but they have no record of this artifact.

Captain John Batchelder's Company was part of Ebenezer Bridge's Regiment, also known as the 11th Massachusetts Regiment. This regiment fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill and served in the Siege of Boston until it was disbanded in December 1775. This regiment had eleven companies, including Batchelder's company. I don't know if Jonathan Flint saw action at Bunker Hill.

Jonathan returned to his life as a farmer in the North Precinct, now called North Reading and died around 1800 at about age 70. The exact date is unknown and I have not found a grave for Jonathan. I descend from his son, John Flint, who was born in North Reading on 3 April 1761 and died there on 26 August 1836. John married his cousin, Phebe Flint, daughter of George Flint and Hannah Phelps. Phebe had eight children with John, and died in 1846. John was also married to Mehitable McIntire, daughter of Archelaus McIntire and Abigail Felton, who had two children with John Flint.

My 5th great grandmother, Lydia Proctor, must have died before 1794. I have found no death record for her, nor a grave site. On 24 June 1794 Jonathan Flint remarried to Sarah Smith. They had no children. I have not found a death record for Sarah, or a grave site. She did not apply for a widow's pension for Jonathan's Revolutionary War service.

Article shared from https://substack.com/home/post/p-191978974

Copyright 2026 Heather Rojo

FOR THE TRULY CURIOUS

- *A Genealogical Register of the Descendants of Thomas Flint, of Salem, by John Flint and John H. Stone, published by Warren F. Draper, Andover, Massachusetts, 1860, see pages 9 and 14.*
- #1 in this series Colonel Joshua Burnham of Milford, New Hampshire: https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2026/02/my-revolutionary-war-patriots-colonel.html
- #2 in this series Major Andrew Munroe of Lexington, Woburn, and Danvers (now Peabody), Massachusetts: https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2026/03/my-revolutionary-war-patriots-major.html

(279)

Anno quinto

Georgii III. Regis.

CAP. XII.

An Act for granting and applying certain Stamp Duties, and other Duties, in the *British* Colonies and Plantations in *America*, towards further defraying the Expences of defending, protecting, and ſecuring the ſame; and for amending ſuch Parts of the ſeveral Acts of Parliament relating to the Trade and Revenues of the ſaid Colonies and Plantations, as direct the Manner of determining and recovering the Penalties and Forfeitures therein mentioned.

WHEREAS by an Act made in the laſt Seſſion of Parliament, ſeveral Duties were granted, continued, and appropriated, towards defraying the Expences of defending, protecting, and ſecuring, the *British* Colonies and Plantations in *America*: and whereas it is juſt and neceſſary, that Proviſion be made for raiſing a further Revenue within Your Majeſty's Dominions in America, towards defraying the ſaid Expences: We, Your Majeſty's moſt dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament aſſembled, have

5

Notice of the Stamp Act 1765 in a colonial newspaper. *Learn more: https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/stamp-act-1765*

Credit: *The Stamp Act. London, 1765, p. 2. London: printed by Mark Baskett, 1766. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (33) //www.loc.gov/exhibits/british/images/vc33.jpg*

RANDY SEAVER

1734–1784

Randy blogs at https://www.geneamusings.com and at https://substack.com/@geneaholic. He covers genealogy, family history, biographies, family trees, DNA, Artificial Intelligence, Ancestry, FamilySearch, blogging, family stories, and more.

SCAN ME

WHEN NORMAN SEAVER RETURNED HOME AFTER LEXINGTON IN 1775

An AI-assisted story about my 5th great-grandfather - #Stories250

(AI image created by Google Gemini 2.5 Flash)

Over twenty of my ancestors served in the Revolutionary War between 1775 and 1783. The service records of these men are documented in the military records and pension files available in books, on Ancestry.com, Fold3.com, FamilySearch.org, and other websites.

My 5th great-grandfather, Norman Seaver (1734-1787) resided in Westminster, Massachusetts in the 1770s, and served as a sergeant of his local militia company in 1775 which marched to Cambridge on the Lexington and Concord alarm on 19 April 1775. He also served

two different periods in Rhode Island as part of different companies and regiments in the 1777-1779 time frame. I wondered what his military experience was like, and what was accomplished by his company and regiment in those service terms. See 52 Ancestors - Week 105: #128 Norman Seaver (1734-1787) for details of Norman's life.

I asked the free Artificial Intelligence LLMs OpenAI ChatGP T4, Anthropic Claude Sonnet 4, X Grok 3, and Google Gemini 2.5 Flash to provide information about Robert's service. That resulted in Ask AI: "Please Describe Norman Seaver's Revolutionary War Service."

1. For this blog post, my prompt was (using the same information from the initial prompt):"Norman returned home to wife Sarah, children Eunice age 20, Benjamin (age 18), Sally (age 16), Joseph (age 14), Isaac (age 12), Ethan (age 10), Daniel (age 8), Heman (age 6), Luther (age 4), Leafy (age 1) in 1775 from the march to Lexington and Cambridge. Please write a short story of Norman coming home and telling his family about his experiences."
2. The Anthropic Claude Sonnet 4 response was:

> ## *Norman's Return: A Revolutionary Homecoming (May 1775)*
>
> *The late afternoon sun cast long shadows across the Westminster fields as Norman Seaver crested the familiar hill that led to his farmstead. His musket felt heavier on his shoulder than it had eleven days ago, and the dust from fifty miles of marching still clung to his worn leather boots. But the sight of smoke rising from his chimney and the sound of children's voices in the yard quickened his tired steps.*
>
> *"Papa's home! Papa's home!" Four-year-old Luther was the first to spot him, his small legs carrying him as fast as they could down the dirt path. Soon the entire household poured out—Sarah wiping flour-dusted hands on her apron, twenty-year-old Eunice bouncing baby Leafy on her hip, and the boys tumbling over each other in their eagerness to reach their father.*
>
> *Norman dropped his pack and swept Luther into his arms, feeling the knot in his chest that had been there since Lexington finally begin to loosen. Sarah reached him next, and he pulled her close with his free arm, breathing in the familiar scent of her hair mixed with the smell of fresh bread.*
>
> *"Thank the Lord you're safe," she whispered against his chest. "We heard such terrible things—that there was fighting, that men were killed."*
>
> *"Aye, there was fighting," Norman said quietly, setting Luther down and looking around at his gathered family. "But I'm here, and I'm whole."*

A short story of Norman coming home and telling his family about his experiences

Eighteen-year-old Benjamin stepped forward, his young face grave beyond his years. "Father, tell us what happened. The riders who came through—they said the British fired on our people at Lexington Green."

Norman nodded slowly, his sergeant's instincts making him assess his audience. His older children could handle the truth, but little Heman, only six, was already wide-eyed with worry.

"Come," he said, "let's sit on the porch, and I'll tell you what I saw."

Sarah bustled inside to fetch cider and the last of the morning's bread while the family settled on the wooden steps and benches Norman had built with his own hands. Baby Leafy gurgled contentedly in Eunice's arms, blissfully unaware that her father had just returned from witnessing the birth of a nation.

"It started before dawn on the nineteenth," Norman began, his voice taking on the measured cadence he'd used when giving orders to his men. "The alarm bells rang, and riders came through shouting that the British regulars were marching on Concord to seize our powder stores. Captain Miles called us to muster immediately."

Twelve-year-old Isaac leaned forward eagerly. "Did you march all night, Papa?"

"Near enough," Norman smiled at his son's enthusiasm. "Fifty miles we covered, with militiamen from every town joining the roads. By the time we reached Cambridge, there must have been fifteen thousand of us—farmers and blacksmiths, merchants and ministers, all carrying whatever weapons we had."

"What about the fighting?" fourteen-year-old Joseph asked. "Did you fight the British?"

Norman's expression grew more serious. "The fighting was at Lexington and Concord before we arrived. But what I saw there, Joseph..." He paused, looking at Sarah, who had returned with a tray and was listening intently. "What I saw was something that will change everything for us."

Eight-year-old Daniel tugged at his father's sleeve. "Were you scared, Papa?"

Norman considered the question carefully. "Any man who says he's not afraid when musket balls are flying is either a liar or a fool. But sometimes, Daniel, there are things more important than being afraid. Sometimes you have to stand up for what's right, even when it's dangerous."

"The British soldiers," sixteen-year-old Sally asked quietly, "were they really as fearsome as people say?"

"They're well-trained and disciplined," Norman replied. "But they're far from home, fighting people they don't understand, for reasons that don't make sense to them. And we—we were fighting for our homes, our families, our right to live as free men."

Ten-year-old Ethan, practical like his mother, asked, "What did you eat? Did you have enough food?"

Norman chuckled, grateful for the lighter question. "That's a soldier's concern, right enough. We ate what we brought and what the good people of Cambridge could spare. Salt pork and hardtack mostly, and corn mush when we were lucky. Made me appreciate your mother's cooking all the more."

Sarah smiled and handed him a cup of cider. "There's a venison stew waiting inside, and apple tarts."

"After eleven days of camp food, that sounds like a feast fit for a king," Norman said, then grew thoughtful. "Though I wonder if we'll be eating many more meals like kings. This business with the British—it's not over. What happened at Lexington and Concord, it's just the beginning."

Benjamin, always the most serious of the children, met his father's eyes. "You think you'll be called out again."

It wasn't a question, and Norman didn't treat it as one. "I do. The British still hold Boston, and they won't give up easy. Every able-bodied man in Massachusetts may be needed before this is done."

A heavy silence fell over the family. Even little Luther seemed to sense the gravity of the moment.

"But that's tomorrow's worry," Norman said, standing and extending his hand to Sarah. "Tonight, I'm home with my family, and that's all that matters. Come, let's have that stew and celebrate being together."

As they moved toward the house, Eunice fell into step beside her father. "Papa," she said quietly, "the women in town are talking about forming a committee to make cartridges and tend to wounded soldiers. They want to help however they can."

Norman looked at his eldest daughter with pride. "That's good, Eunice. This fight—if it is to be a fight—will require sacrifices from all of us, not just the men who carry muskets."

Inside the warm kitchen, surrounded by the chatter of his children and the comfort of his wife's presence, Norman tried to push away the images that had haunted him during the long march home: the British regulars' red coats bright against the spring morning, the acrid smell of gunpowder hanging in the air, the grim faces of his fellow militiamen as they realized that what had started as a local dispute had escalated into something far larger and more dangerous.

He looked around the table at his family—from twenty-year-old Eunice, so capable and steady, down to baby Leafy sleeping peacefully in her mother's arms—and felt the weight of what he might be called to sacrifice. But he also felt something else: a fierce determination to ensure that his children would grow up in a world where they could speak their minds, worship as they chose, and live free from the arbitrary rule of distant kings.

As Sarah served the stew and the children peppered him with more questions about camp life and military drill, Norman Seaver, sergeant in the Massachusetts militia, husband and father, allowed himself this one evening of peace before the storm that would reshape their world truly began.

3. Here is the Audio Overview created by the free Google NotebookLM AI tool based on this story.

SCAN ME

NotebookLM AI Tool link: https://geneaholic.substack.com/p/when-norman-seaver-returned-home

4. *The Claude Sonnet 4 response to the prompt was interesting and probably is accurate because the pre-trained resources used are well known. I asked the same question of ChatGPT4, Grok, and Gemini and received similar responses. I chose Claude for this blog post because it seemed to be the most informed and most conversational.*

5. *This is a historical fiction story based on an actual and significant event in the lives of Norman Seaver's family - one they recalled for the rest of their lives. They were real people in a real setting. I want to believe the above fictional account and dialogue is realistic, but it is historical fiction based on my family history research and Claude's creation of dialogue. The account is inspiring, touching and heartfelt.*

6. *Using AI tools to answer history and geography-related questions is like having an instant library in my computer. Using AI tools to write biographies and memories, and to tell fictional family stories, is like hiring a gifted writer to turn my genealogical research and sketches into readable blog posts, websites, or books.*

Links to my blog posts about using Artificial Intelligence are on my Randy's AI and Genealogy page. Links to AI information and articles about Artificial Intelligence in Genealogy by other genealogists are on my AI and Genealogy Compendium page.

Article shared from https://geneaholic.substack.com/p/when-norman-seaver-returned-home

Copyright 2026 Randy Seaver

Magna Britannia: Her Colonies Reduced. *1766 print designed by Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) illustrated "The Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin" (London: 1833), a book edited by the subject's grandson William Temple Franklin. References the political turmoil following the Stamp Act in 1765. After an 1766 original. Etching and engraving, 2 15/16 × 4 1/2 in. (7.5 × 11.5 cm)*

***Credit**: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, Gift of William H. Huntington, 1883 (83.2.759)*

1734–1801

CAPTAIN JOSEPH DURFEE

1725 - 1801 "For Sale - Stories 250"

Anne blogs at Grandma's Granny's Family Album https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com This piece was part of Genealogy Matters Storyteller Tuesday Challenge: RABBIT-HOLE RESEARCH.

SCAN ME

Engraving of minutemen by Felix Octavius Carr Darley, 1822-1888, Battle of Rhode Island, 1778, from https://revolutionarywarjournal.com/battle-of-rhode-island/

The vacation was over. My cousin and I were driving down the highway towards the ferry we had booked for early the next morning. We had spent a glorious 2 weeks traipsing the scenes of our childhood recollections of family vacations where our grandparents hailed from. Since we are ten years apart, our experiences were different, and we had been visiting each other's memories.

"Let's go by and see where Uncle Ike and Aunt Mary used to live," I said. "Sure," she said. We detoured down the road. As we approached the driveway, we saw the most unbelievable sight I have ever seen — a For Sale sign.

The vacation was over. My cousin and I were driving down the highway towards the ferry we had booked for early the next morning. We had spent a glorious 2 weeks traipsing the scenes of our childhood recollections of family vacations where our grandparents hailed from. Since we are ten years apart, our experiences were different, and we had been visiting each other's memories.

The second incredible aspect was the house they lived in. It was 200 years old and had no plumbing. I got to pull 3 pails of cool clear water from the well a day and set them in the dry sink, then use a dipper to fill a basin or cup or the kettle. I got to wash in my own bedroom with my own porcelain bowl and pitcher, soap and towel. I got to brush my teeth outdoors with a cup of water and spit toothpaste on the grass. I got to wash dishes in a basin with water heated in a kettle — on the counter, the table, or anywhere. And I got to use an outhouse, which stunk so bad it was funny!

The house itself was a treasure to a history-lover like me. The best part was the old kitchen, the likes of which I had only seen in historical villages. Everyone called it the Captain's house. It made me sick when they tore it down and put up a kit home.

A For Sale notice, coming on our last day in Nova Scotia? It was a Sign all right. I could not resist driving to the real estate office. Because it was last minute, they were not able to show the house. "I don't need to see it; I know what it looks like," I said. "I just need the information." The agent gave me the listing and survey. "You're crazy," my cousin said.

I thought I was crazy too. But two months later, I was the proud owner of a childhood dream.

This is my rabbit hole. It's not my ancestor's land grant*. It's not even my ancestor. But connected to me nonetheless.

1960, photo in author's collection

Captain Joseph Durfee 1725 - 1801

The land in this picture is part of the large 550-acre land grant given to Captain Joseph Durfee in 1783 by King George III of England.

When the Captain and his wife Ann arrived in Shelburne, they chose this hill to build their home on. It had a commanding view, and they could even watch the town across the harbour grow as buildings rose.

Shelburne Waterfront, https://novascotia.com/explore-by-region/south-shore/shelburne/

A Sea Captain's House

Remnants of the Durfees' stone house can still be seen. It had four floors and four separate entrances. On the wide-planked ground

floor, the fieldstone kitchen boasted a tremendous fireplace with a built-in oven. An adjoining pantry led to the root cellar, which could also be accessed from the outside. The front entrance hall faced the harbour, since guests arrived by boat. Sets of stairs with landings climbed to the parlour and two bedrooms on the second floor. These were likely for the Captain and Ann and their only son, 25-year-old Robert. A servant's room and a huge "nursery" for the girls, ages 15 to 23, were located on the top floor. There was even an indoor outhouse for those cold winters!

Original house on left side, addition on right side, photo in author's collection

Later, the Durfees built an addition on the hill. The first floor of the extension matched the second floor of the old section. The expansion provided a porch, modern kitchen with a wood stove, pantry, and back entrance with another staircase leading to a new bedroom.

The Revolution Starts

You chose a good spot to read about - it's imbued with Captain Durfee's character. He was a good man held in high regard throughout his life. Even his enemies liked him! Honest. Faithful. Hard-working. A critical thinker not easily influenced by others, he planned his own future – almost impossible in a revolution! He put himself in positions of responsibility where he could help others, including former slaves. And once his choices were made, he stuck to them, even to the point of risking his life.

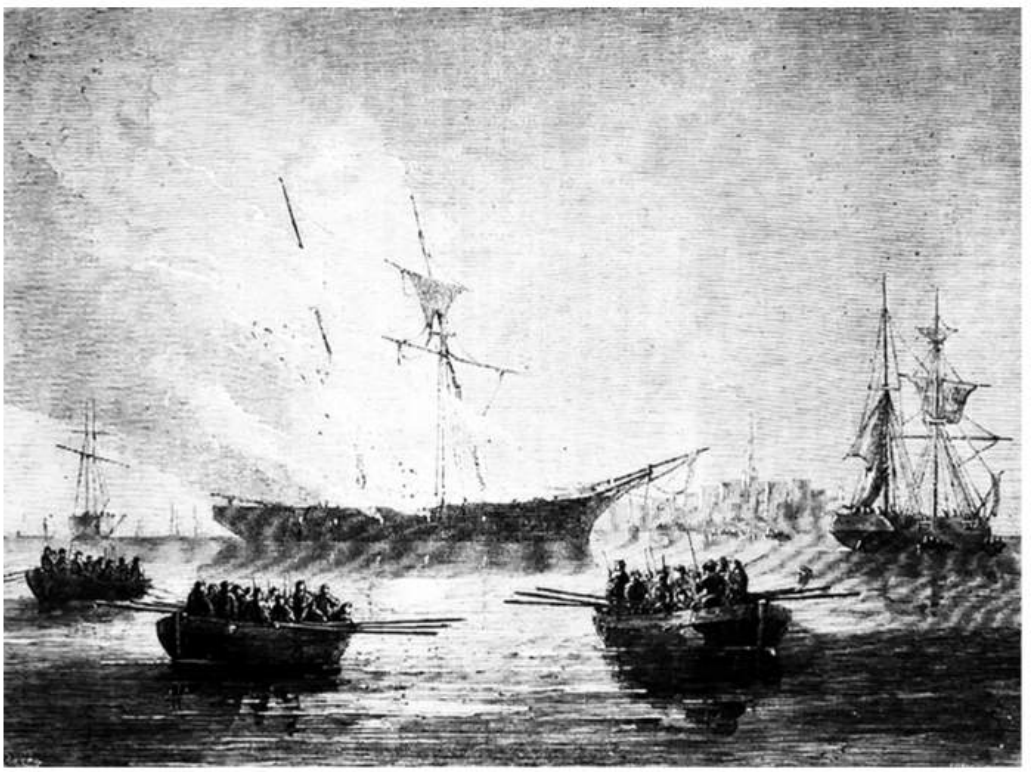
The Captain earned his land grant by his actions during the American Revolution, 1775-1783. About ⅓ of Americans, called Loyalists, remained loyal to King George. Of those, another 1/3 felt so strongly that the colonies should remain British subjects, they took up arms. One-third of Americans wanted independence, and the other third didn't care. They just wanted to be left alone. That was mostly impossible, because your neighbors would demand you sign a pledge, and they often posted your name in the newspaper to show which side you were on.

1870 engraving by J. Newell depicts Newport as it was in 1730

Joseph Durfee was a "seafaring man" and merchant in Newport, Rhode Island Province. He had been born in Portsmouth, a mere 8 miles away, to a family that had been wealthy since their arrival almost a century earlier. When Joseph was 3, he and his two sisters lost their mother; at 6, he acquired a step-mother that led to 4 younger half-brothers.

What would you do if the political disagreements in your town turned to violence?

Joseph probably believed that his ability to continue doing business profitably lay with the British, and he likely believed in law and order. The war had come early to Rhode Island; angry rebels had been attacking ships and harassing British customs officers for years. In response, British customs ships pursued American cargo ships suspected of evading customs. The situation burst into flames when a group of men rowed out to a British customs ship that had run aground. Instead of rescuing its crew, they attacked. Once the crew was ashore, the attackers burned the ship to the waterline. Due to the turmoil, the Durfees, traveling with 5 children aged 4 to 14, fled to Dartmouth, Massachusetts.



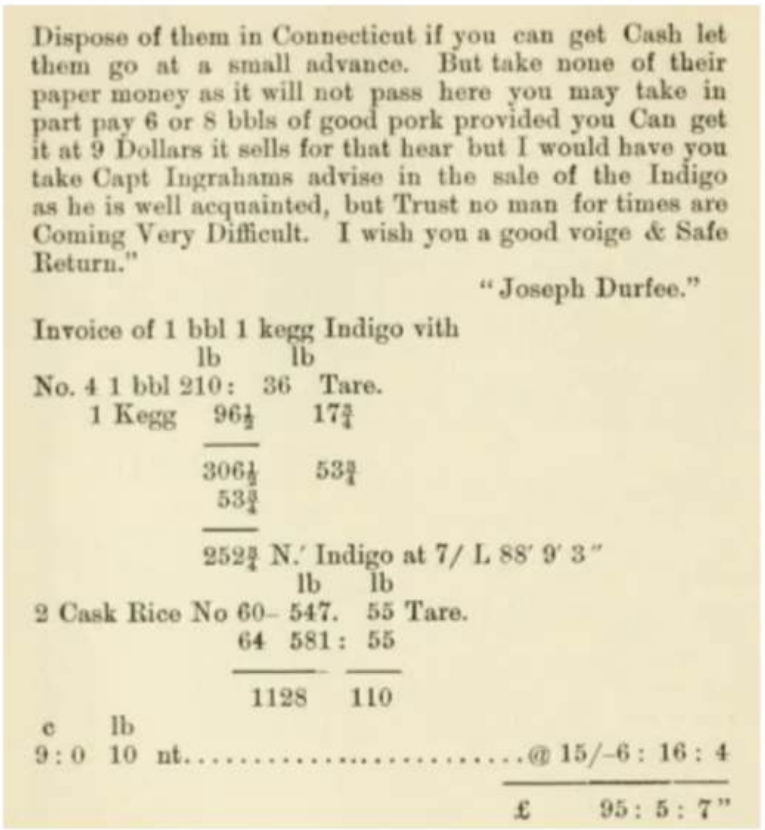
Gaspee: Burning of the Gaspee, 1777. From "Cassell's Illustrated History of England, Volume 5"

But they weren't there long when the fury of the mob sent them back to Newport. Apparently Captain Durfee was well respected in Newport, because Americans there allowed him to "remain quiet," or not declare a side, and they didn't throw him in prison for it.

Joseph and Ann lived on School Street, a wealthy part of the city close to the wharves, with their 5 children (one had died in infancy) and 2 other people, probably servants. Did they replicate this house in Shelburne? It had 8 rooms as well as a stable with 2 horses. Joseph was actually one of its assessors, one of three officials who documented property for the British.

"Trust No Man"

Joseph and his youngest brother Oliver did business together in goods such as wood, indigo, and rice. Joseph would send Oliver goods that had arrived in Newport for Oliver to take to Connecticut and sell. But 1775 would see their last sale together. Joseph instructed Oliver to take cash (coins) or trade the goods for pork, but not to take paper money, which was not accepted in Newport. He also advised, "Trust no man, for times are Coming Very Difficult." Joseph wished Oliver, ten years younger, a good voyage and safe return.



Dispose of them in Connecticut if you can get Cash let them go at a small advance. But take none of their paper money as it will not pass here you may take in part pay 6 or 8 bbls of good pork provided you Can get it at 9 Dollars it sells for that hear but I would have you take Capt Ingrahams advise in the sale of the Indigo as he is well acquainted, but Trust no man for times are Coming Very Difficult. I wish you a good voige & Safe Return."

"Joseph Durfee."

Invoice of 1 bbl 1 kegg Indigo vith

	lb	lb	
No. 4 1 bbl	210 :	36	Tare.
1 Kegg	96½	17¾	
	306½	53¾	
	53¾		
	252¾	N.' Indigo at 7/ L 88' 9' 3"	

	lb	lb	
2 Cask Rice No 60-	547.	55	Tare.
64	581 :	55	
	1128	110	

c	lb		
9 : 0	10	nt.....	@ 15/-6 : 16 : 4
			£ 95 : 5 : 7"

Correspondence from Joseph to Oliver Durfee, 1775

Joseph and Oliver trusted each other, a rare commodity when no one knew what would happen next. For the Durfee brothers, that trust was destroyed when they chose opposite allegiances. Did Joseph expect his brother to remain loyal? Middletown, Rhode Island, where Oliver lived, was a distinct farming community, even tho it was only 3 miles away. Things were different there from majority Loyalist Newport; Middletowners followed the rebellious Rhode Island way of thinking.

Soon enough, they had made up their minds. Peer pressure proved stronger than family ties. Then as now, where people live influences their political beliefs.

Action in the Revolution

When the British occupied Newport in 1776, Joseph decided to put his life on the line. He joined the Loyal Newport Associates and defended the garrison as a captain in their Corps. Oliver chose the opposite side and was commissioned a lieutenant in the Middletown militia. Joseph left Newport in October of 1779 when the British did, and supported himself in New York "at great expense." It most likely cost so much because his family came with him, and prices in occupied New York were exorbitant.

Sir Henry Clinton, Commander in Chief of all British Forces in America, was told that Joseph had "a Knowledge of the Southern Coast of America," and therefore chose him to participate in the British capture of Charleston, South Carolina.

Because he knew the channel leading to Charleston, Joseph was assigned to assist in setting the buoys and appointed to pilot the Richmond, the frigate leading the fleet to attack. The entire fleet proceeded past Fort Moultrie under "heavy and incessant fire" and assisted in the siege of Charleston until "the Reduction of that Place." General Clinton himself expressed his high opinion of Durfee's "character and loyalty and services."

A depiction of the Siege of Charleston (1780) by Alonzo Chappel. March 29-May 12, 1780

After the South Carolina battle, Captain Durfee returned to New York City and was given 50 guineas*towards his expenses. He became Superintendent of Small Craft, a position he held under the British until the war was over.

"In Consequence of his Opposition to the late Rebellion"

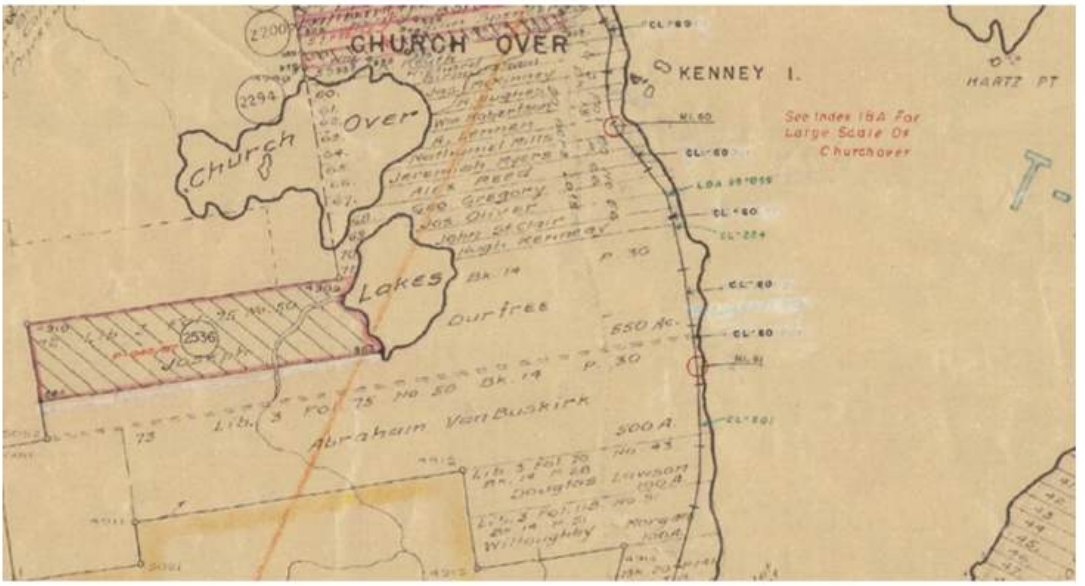
Loyalists not only lost their money and property, they were often hanged or imprisoned for treason, especially more prominent ones like the Captain. After the British surrendered, panicked Loyalists poured into New York City. Durfee and other important men banded together to form the Port Roseway Associates. He was chosen to be

one of the captains and made a magistrate. The Associates planned to evacuate to Port Roseway, a promising area in the British colony of Nova Scotia with a deep harbour that was already known for fishing.

Evacuation of New York by the British, November 25, 1783 - John Van Arsdale nailing the American flag to the flagpole at The Battery, the southern tip of Manhattan, after ripping off the British flag. Before leaving, a clever jokester nailed the British flag to the pole and removed the ropes used to raise and lower it, so the flagpole would need to be climbed to reach the flag, then greased the pole to make climbing difficult. After attempts by various people, John Van Arsdale hit upon the idea to craft wooden cleats. At the top of a ladder brought to lean against the flagpole, John nailed the cleats to the pole to use as steps. Upon reaching the British flag, he ripped it off and began nailing on the American colors.

In April of 1783, the Captain and Ann, their 5 children, and three Black Loyalists boarded the schooner Nancy, bound for Port Roseway. They were some of the earliest evacuees. Joseph served as an escort for 3 Black Loyalists: freeborn carpenter John Daniel, age 31, and two former slaves, Jacob Somerset, age 21, and John Gibbons, age 43.

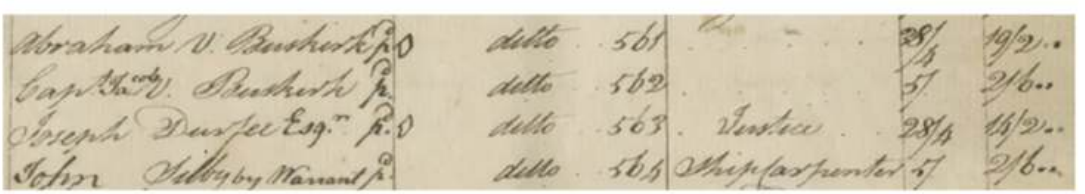
Port Roseway was quickly renamed Shelburne after the British Prime Minister. In December 1785, when Durfee sought compensation for what he had lost in the war, several high officials testified on his behalf. Nova Scotia's Governor Parr wrote that Durfee was "a good subject and an honest man"; Brooke Watson, the British commissary in New York, said that he had been "a faithful servant of the crown"; and Sir Andrew Hamond, the former lieutenant governor of Nova Scotia, recommended Durfee "strongly" to his superior in the Halifax Command.



Map of Crown land grants - you can see that Captain Durfee's grant is exceedingly larger than other grants - the striped section reverted to the Crown1

Later Life

The Captain continued his life on the west side of Shelburne Harbour with the same character he had always shown. Having left their extended family behind in what had become a different country (Joseph's father died in Rhode Island the year after he arrived in Shelburne), Joseph and Ann set about making their own family a new life.



> *In 1786, Joseph Durfee, Esquire, of Carleton Village, taxpayer number 563, Justice of the Peace, paid 28 shillings 4 pence county tax and 14 shillings 2 pence tax for relief of the poor.*
>
> *In 1787, Durphee, Joseph, Esquire, of Roseway River, paid on 19 May 1788, taxpayer number 791, 8 shillings county tax and 7 shillings poor tax (the Captain has not moved - the name of the area has changed)*

The ever-changing life of a merchant traveling to far-off places savoring exotic goods may have been exciting, but war and displacement would recommend settling in to become a farmer, fisherman, Justice of the Peace, and Judge of the Court of Common Pleas.

> *In 1792, Joseph Durfee is a farmer paying 2 shillings 6 pence in taxes.*
>
> *In 1795, taxpayer number 213, Jos. Durfee, a shallop owner with 8 cattle and 12 sheep, paid 5 shillings in taxes (a shallop is a small sailboat used for fishing)*

Joseph was held in high regard the rest of his life. When he died in 1801, his obituary stated that he had "removed to Shelburne with his family and the wreck of his property and sat himself down upon a tract of uncultivated land. The same industry and perseverance which had uniformly distinguished him soon rendered him an example to that infant settlement. Few men possessed a more manly and independent mind, exhibited more striking traits of industry, or have quitted life more generally and universally regretted."

Referred article: https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/the-map-our-ancestors-forgot

SCAN ME

NOTES

** I wrote about that in a different Storyteller Challenge: https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/the-map-our-ancestors-forgot*

*** a guinea was worth 20 shillings at the time, or about a pound in English money.*

REFERENCES

- *Reed, William Field, The Descendants of Thomas Durfee of Portsmouth, RI, Gibson Brothers Printers and Bookbinders, 1902, #88, https://archive.org/details/descendantsoftho00lcreed/page/210/mode/2up?view=theater*
- *Durfee, Joseph - MemoryNS*
- *Memorial of Joseph Durfee of Rhode Island, Loyalist Institute: Memorial of Joseph Durfee of Rhode Island*
- *The Revolutionary War in Rhode Island: Timeline*
- *Rhode Island becomes first colony to renounce allegiance to George III | May 4, 1776 | HISTORY*
- *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Charleston*
- *Wikipedia, Battle of Rhode Island*
- *https://revolutionarywarjournal.com/battle-of-rhode-island/*
- *https://www.britannica.com/event/American-Revolution*
- *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evacuation_Day_(New_York)*

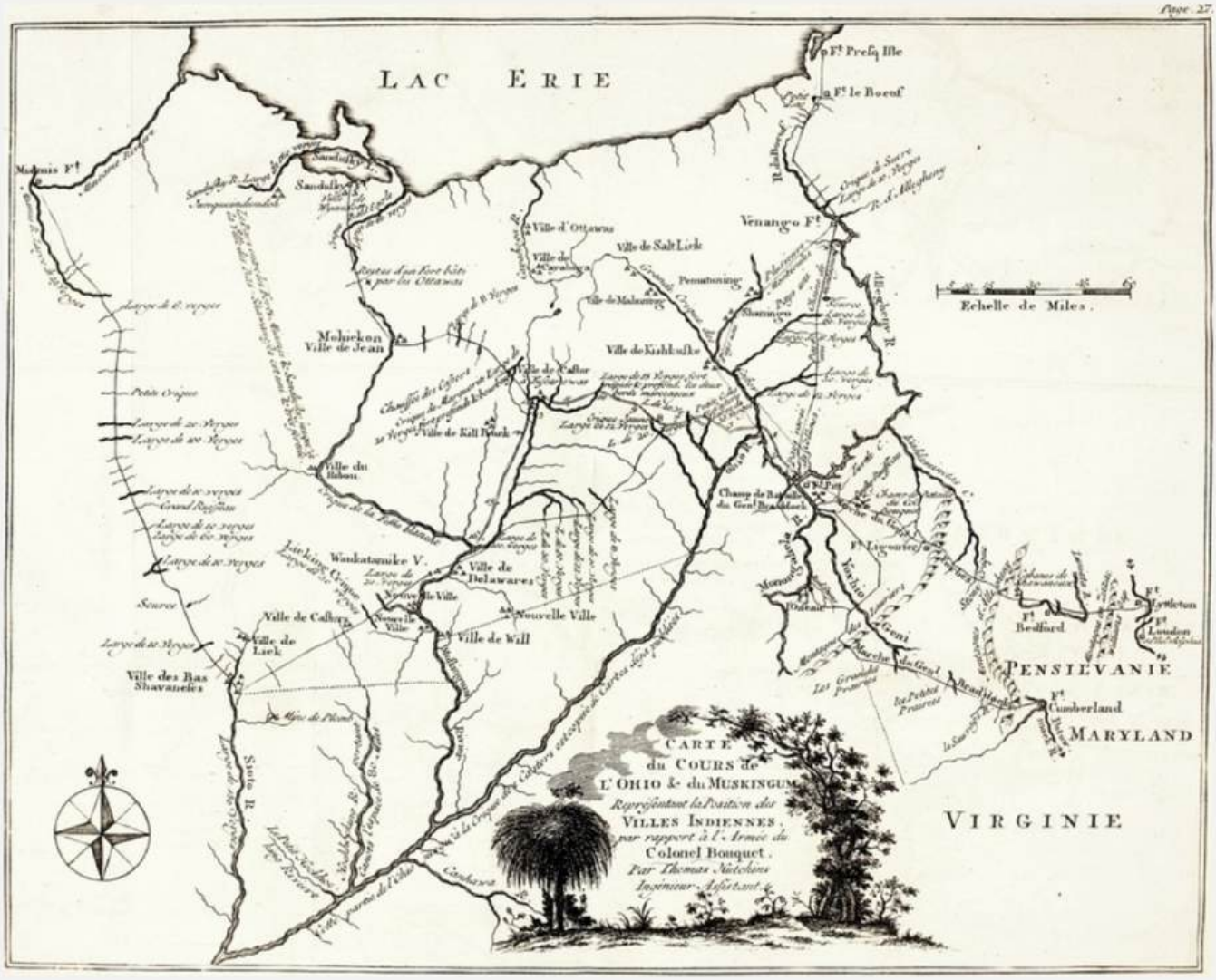
Article shared from https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/captain-joseph-durfee-1725-1801

SCAN ME

FOOTNOTES

1. *Crown Land Information Management Centre | novascotia.ca, Crown copyright Government of Nova Scotia*
2. *Public Archives of Nova Scotia, https://archives.novascotia.ca/, Crown copyright Government of Nova Scotia*

Copyright 2026 Anne Wendel



***Carte du Cours de L'Ohio & du Muskingume**, ca. 1769. One of two plates engraved by Benjamin West which first appeared in the London edition of 1766 of "Relation Historique de L'Expédition, Contre Les Indiens de L'Ohio en MDCCLXIV, by Smith, William, 1727-1803; Dumas, Charles Guillaume Frédéric, ca. 1725-1780.*

***Credit**: From the Internet Archive (Source book page: https://archive.org/stream/relationhistoriq00smit/relationhistoriq00smit#page/n54/mode/1up) and Wikimedia.*

1735–1801

JOEL&CHRISTIAN SIMMS REVOLUTIONARY WAR PATRIOTS

"They also serve who only stand and wait." – Stories 250.

Anne blogs at Grandma's Granny's Family Album https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com

SCAN ME

Source: https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Space:North_Carolina_Militia

RECORDED TALK

SCAN ME

My partner's 6th great-grandfather Joel Simms is the ancestor of fifteen different members of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). If fifteen people took the time to document Joel's service and their lineage from him, he must have been a brave and dashing hero. Right?

So I eagerly examined the service he is documented to have performed to allow his descendants membership in that august society. Ready?

He was a juror. And he furnished supplies.

Really? Jury duty? Making a donation? That's it?

Let's research some more. Maybe he convicted Blackbeard. Maybe he provided horses to the entire North Carolina militia.

Jury Duty

I found this record of Joel serving on a jury on the 15th of March 1773. His experience looks to be about as far from a convicting a swashbuckling pirate as a juror can get. Not a murder trial; not even a criminal case. It was a personal lawsuit. Joel and his fellow jurors found for the plaintiff, Frances Loues, against John Smith. A million-dollar payout in Spanish milled dollars, or British pounds, or Continental scrip? Not exactly. Damages were awarded in the amount of....six pence. Smith was ordered to pay court costs. Also six pence.1

We may not quite see how this is Revolutionary War service, but it was an act of defiance. The only courts that were supposed to function were Crown courts. For the revolutionary government to run its own trials and judges was an insurrection of its own.

Militia Service

Joel did hold an officer's rank, ensign, in the Wake County, North Carolina, militia. The ensign literally held the sign, the flag of the regiment. It was the lowest rank of officer. However, the job was more important than it sounds. The flag was the main method of communication in the thunder of battle. Holding it aloft told the soldiers where their own regiment was and where they needed to go...advance or retreat. It could be used for other communication, and as such, it was vital to the unit's success.

But Joel was an ensign in 1773, when Americans were just complaining about the British and redcoats were stationed in Boston just to enforce taxes.

Before war, each North Carolina county had raised a militia. They were often prominent men of the area, politicians and businessmen, not soldiers. There wasn't much fighting to be done, but the colony wanted to be ready. There were Indians to chase, the French to guard against, pirates to capture, and you never knew when the Spanish might take it into their heads to come up from Spanish

Florida for more land. The militias only met a few times a year and stayed close to home. Numbers of militiamen rose and fell with the need.

North Carolina decided better oversight was in order, so they required biannual muster rolls.2 That's how we know Joel was present as an ensign on 6th October 1773.

Did he stay in the militia once war began?

I found Joel in a faded pay abstract that his other descendants may have missed. He was due a month's pay of 6 and 2/3 dollars in Capt. Robert Davis's company of militia in January 1778.3 I cannot make out the total paid that would indicate how long he served. If we look at birth patterns for an answer, a gap in births between 1773 and 1779 makes it look like Joel may not have been home during those years.

By 1778, Joel was about 45 years old; he and his wife Christian were raising six children out of the nine they would eventually have. Perhaps at this point leaving soldiering to younger men made sense; better to stay home and support the effort with donations.

But could he legally have left the militia and stayed home? North Carolina made war service mandatory for men between ages 16 and 50. However, there were long-standing traditional exemptions:

- You could hire a substitute, as long as he wasn't a deserter from the British Army (with suspect loyalty), an orphan or apprentice under 18 (give them a chance to live before you send them off to die), a sailor (no robbing the Navy for the Army), a slave (no giving them weapons in case they decided to revolt), or an Indian (no arming them either).

> *IV. Provided always, That no British or Hessian deserter who hath not been a resident of this State twelve months, or orphan or apprentice under eighteen years of age, Indian, sailor or negro slave, shall be received as a substitute for any class volunteer or draft whatever...*

- You could supply a team of four horses to pull a wagon sturdy enough to hold one ton of supplies. That donation specifically exempted forty men (two classes).

> *XV. Provided nevertheless, That any two classes in each regiment who shall produce to the commanding officer of the regiment one good waggon, and team of four good horses, geers and every thing compleat for*

> *the road, fit to carry one ton at least, and deliver the same as public property, for the use of the North Carolina brigade, shall be exempt from the draft.*

- You could pay taxes above and beyond your regular taxes — 3 pounds for every 100 pounds of property.

> *V. Be it therefore enacted...That all the free men in this State who possess taxable property of greater value than two hundred pounds, shall pay an additional tax of four shillings in every hundred pounds of his taxable property, to be paid in specie and specific commodities, for and in lieu of all military services.*

- You could be a religious pacifist such as a Quaker, Moravian, Menonist, or Dunkard, in which case you had to pay triple taxes.

> *Moravians, Quakers, Menonists and Dunkards, who are by law subject to a three fold tax, in lieu of all draughts and military duty, excepted.*

- You could be physically disabled or chronically ill.

> *III. And be it further enacted, That the commanding officer of the several regiments within their respective counties... shall cause all the inhabitants of their counties between the ages of sixteen and fifty to be enrolled, no respect being had to any exemptions, and hold a court of enquiry to exempt such who are unfit for service4*

Du Dimitie're, Pierre Euge'ne, 1777, soldiers and camp followers of the Continental Army's North Carolina Brigade, Philadelphia, Aug. 25, 1777.5

Vouchers

What did Joel and Christian decide? I found four pay vouchers6 showing that they chose the horse and wagon route later on. The Continental Army didn't pay in money; they didn't have any. They paid in vouchers that both soldiers and donors collected from the government after the war. We know these are donor vouchers, not soldier salaries, because none of these are labeled military pay.7

The following are images of Joel's vouchers. The holes indicate that the voucher was redeemed.

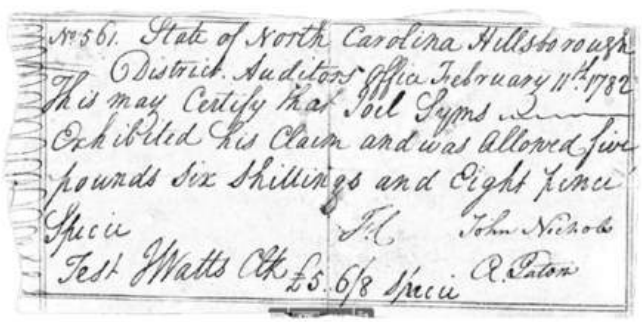
June 29 1781.....90 pounds

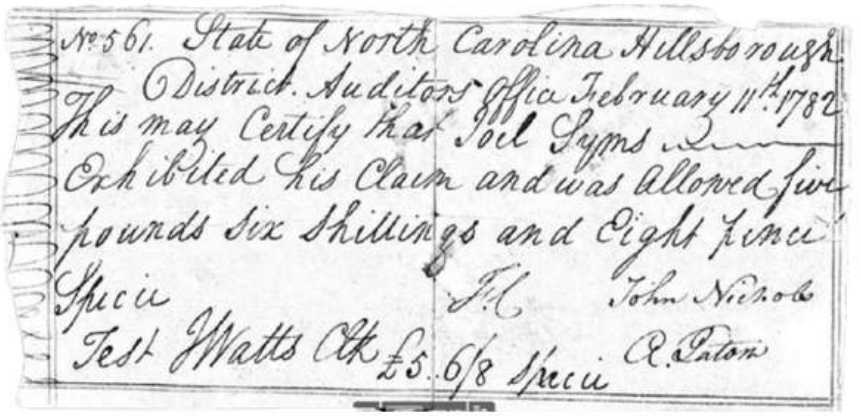
The first donation Joel and Christian made was worth a considerable amount of money...90 British pounds. The money could have provided a horse-and-wagon team, since that was something the army specifically wanted. It would have gotten forty of their neighbors out of fighting.

Sept. 30 1781..... 5 pounds 6 shillings 6 pence minus 1 pound 16 shillings 6 pence equals 1 pound 10 shillings 2 pence - rejected. The amount may have dropped because of post-war deflation, items found unallowable, or partial payment already made.8

Later on, states tried to get reimbursed from the federal government for what they paid individuals for goods. The United States rejected most of those claims. "Rejected" most likely refers to the US refusing to pay North Carolina, not North Carolina refusing to pay Joel.

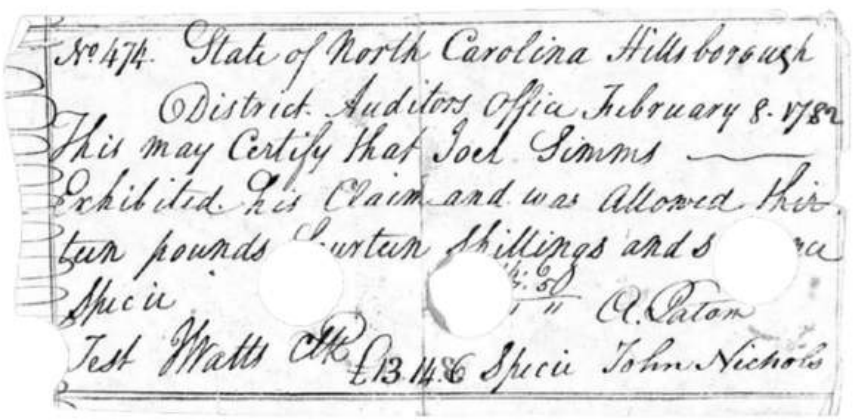
Feb. 11 1782..... 5 pounds, 6 shillings, 8 pence



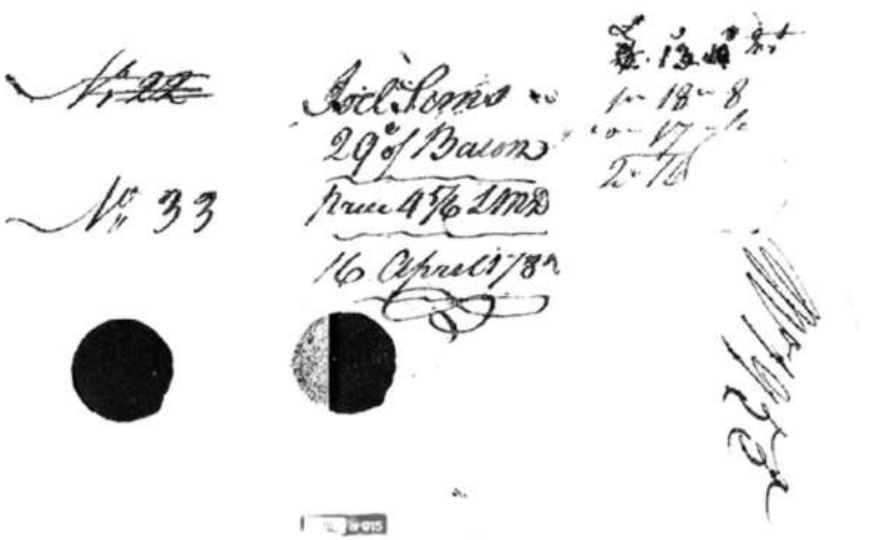

No 561. State of North Carolina Hillsborough
District. Auditors Office February 11th 1782
This may Certify that Joel Sypns
Exhibited his Claim and was allowed five
pounds Six Shillings and Eight pence
Specie
Test Watts Clk £5.6/8 Specie
John Nichols
A. Paton

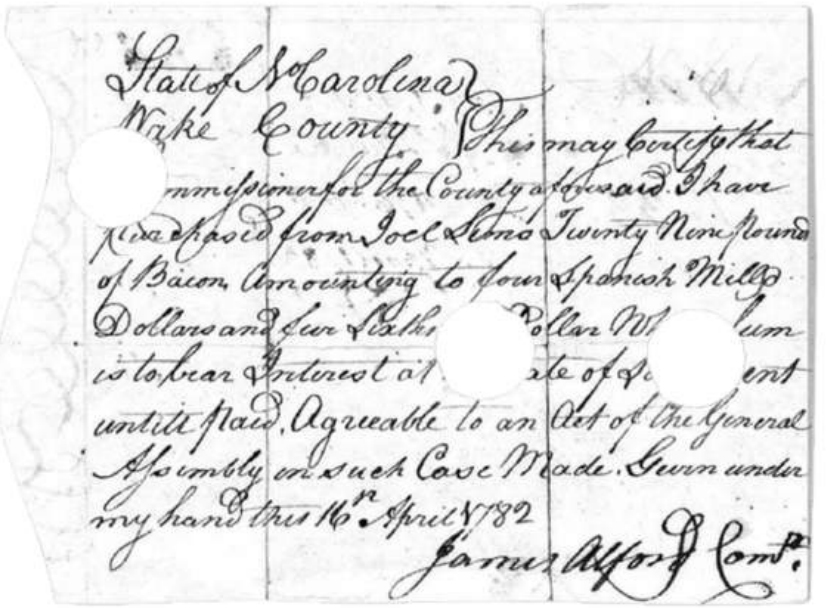
Joel re-submitted this claim five months later. It is not hole punched, so it was not redeemed. This appears to me to be the same claim as the one that was rejected, since it is for the same amount. The rejection would explain why it was not redeemed.

Feb. 8 1782..... 13 pounds 14 shillings 6 pence


No 474. State of North Carolina Hillsborough
District Auditors Office February 8. 1782
This may Certify that Joel Simms
Exhibited his Claim and was allowed thir
teen pounds fourteen shillings and 6
Specie
Test Watts Clk £13.14.6 Specie
A. Paton
John Nichols

April 16 1782..... 29 pounds of bacon, equalling 4 4/6 Spanish milled dollars



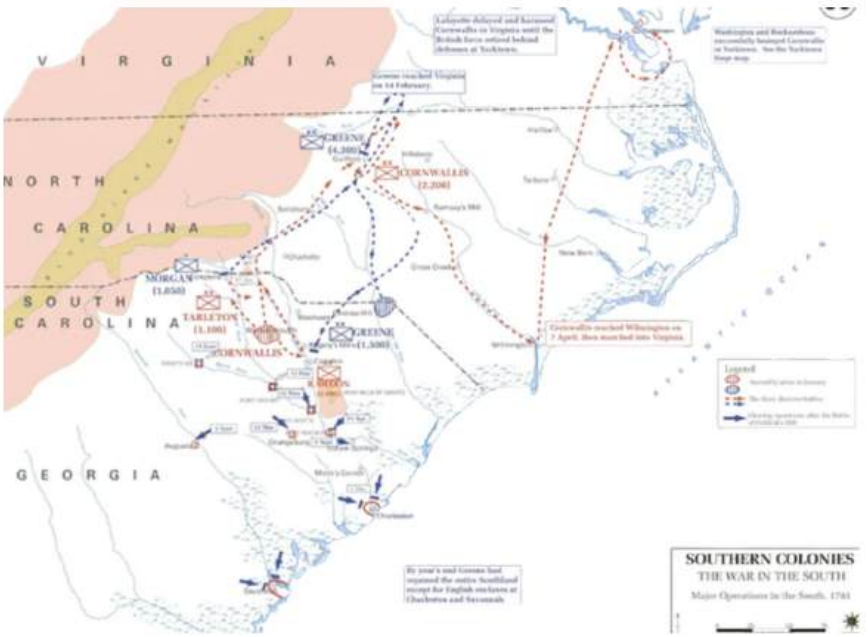

State of No Carolina
Wake County This may Certify that
mmissioner for the County aforesaid I have
purchased from Joel Simms Twenty Nine pounds
of Bacon Amounting to four Spanish Mills
Dollars and four Sixth Dollar W um
is to bear Interest at ate of ent
untill paid, Agreeable to an Act of the General
Assembly in such Case Made. Given under
my hand this 16th April 1782
James Alford Comr.

This is the first voucher in Spanish dollars instead of British pounds. Spanish money was more accurate and plentiful in the colonies; the milled, or ridged, sides meant that cheaters couldn't chisel bits of silver off coins.9

Two slices of fried bacon.

It's for 29 pounds of bacon. An odd number, it sounds like that was the food the Simms family had on hand. It sounds like they sat at the kitchen table and talked about what they could donate. Non-perishable, cured with salt, packed with protein, bacon is the perfect army ration. Enough to feed the whole family for quite a while, yet Christian let it leave her kitchen for the cause. No military quartermaster showed up at the smokehouse to seize it...Joel sold it thru proper channels to civilian Commissioner James Alford. The voucher states "which sum is to bear interest until paid"....but they didn't know when, and couldn't be sure if, they would be paid. The bacon claim was redeemed, but we know that one of their claims was not.

All of Joel and Christian's donations were made in 1781 and 1782. While the first half of the Revolution was largely fought in the North, the second half consumed the South, with ten or so major battles and far more skirmishes, raids, and guerilla warfare. By that time, the Continental Army badly needed supplies. Their strategy was to move fast and harry the British into submission, while the British tried to cut off American supply lines.10

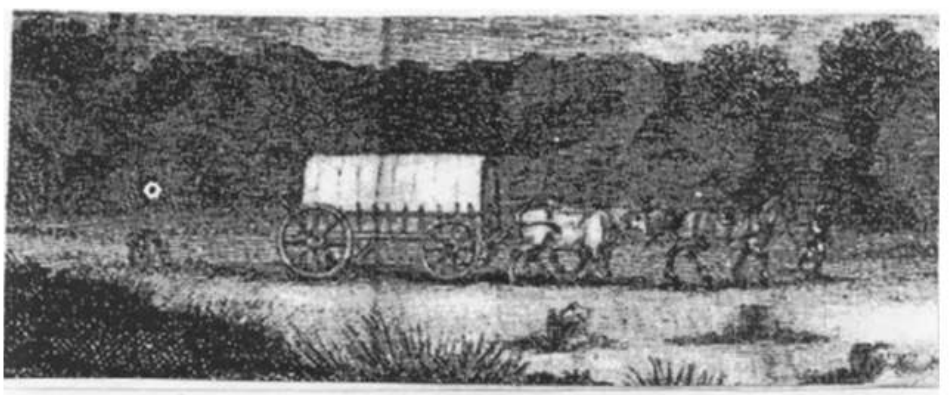


map of the Southern Campaign in 1781 shows how active the troops were.11

Joel and Christian knew what the new nation needed towards the end, and it was supplies rather than soldiers. First they supported the rebel government's judicial system. Then they risked Joel's life in a fighting war, with Christian running the farm and six children on her own. Even after that, they decided to keep on giving. They sent their children's own food and a good deal of money to the cause at a time when the war had dragged on for five years. No one knew it was about to end in British defeat at Yorktown; it could have ground on for five more.

No less a conqueror than Napoleon reputedly said, "An army marches on its stomach.12

Joel and Christian sent the men bacon.



Anburey, Thomas, detailed crop of an etching titled "Encampment of the Convention Army at Charlotte Ville in Virginia after they had surrendered to the Americans,"

Opening quote from John Milton, Sonnet #19, Milton's 1673 Poems. Published by William Lane, London, 1789.13

FOOTNOTES

1. *https://www.the-sims-family.net/genealogy/sims/docs/North_Carolina_Wake_Co_Court_Minutes_1771-1776.pdf*

2. *https://www.ncpedia.org/militias-colonial*

3. *Revolutionary War Rolls, #35, DAR document 14349321, https://services.dar.org/Public/DAR_Research*

4. *https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr24-0012*

5. *In the sketch, the brigade is "en route to join the rest of General George Washington's army stationed south of the city. After detailed research and analysis, Museum curator Matthew Skic identified the sketch's creator to be Swiss artist and collector Pierre Eugène du Simitière (1737-1784), who settled in Philadelphia in about 1774. Du Simitière is known for documenting the rising American Revolution as it happened. An ink inscription below the vignette, written by du Simitière, reads, in part, 'an exact representation of a waggon belonging to the north carolina brigade of continental troops which passed thro Philadelphia.'" https://www.amrevmuseum.org/bringing-an-eyewitness-sketch-of-the-continental-army-to-life*

6. *Joel Simms in North Carolina Revolutionary Pay Vouchers, 1779-1782, Ancestry.com, North Carolina Revolutionary Pay Vouchers, 1779-1782. Salt Lake City, UT, USA: FamilySearch, 2016, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., /search/collections/61947/records/24296?tid=43983535&pid=13641502357&ssrc=pt*

7. *https://combs-families.org/combs/records/nc/rw-pay.htm*

8. *Auditors had the discretion to cut claims they deemed unreasonable. https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr24-0012*

9. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_dollar*

10. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_theater_of_the_American_Revolutionary_War*

11. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_theater_of_the_American_Revolutionary_War*

12. *https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2015/06/18/414614705/appetite-for-war-what-napoleon-and-his-men-ate-on-the-march*

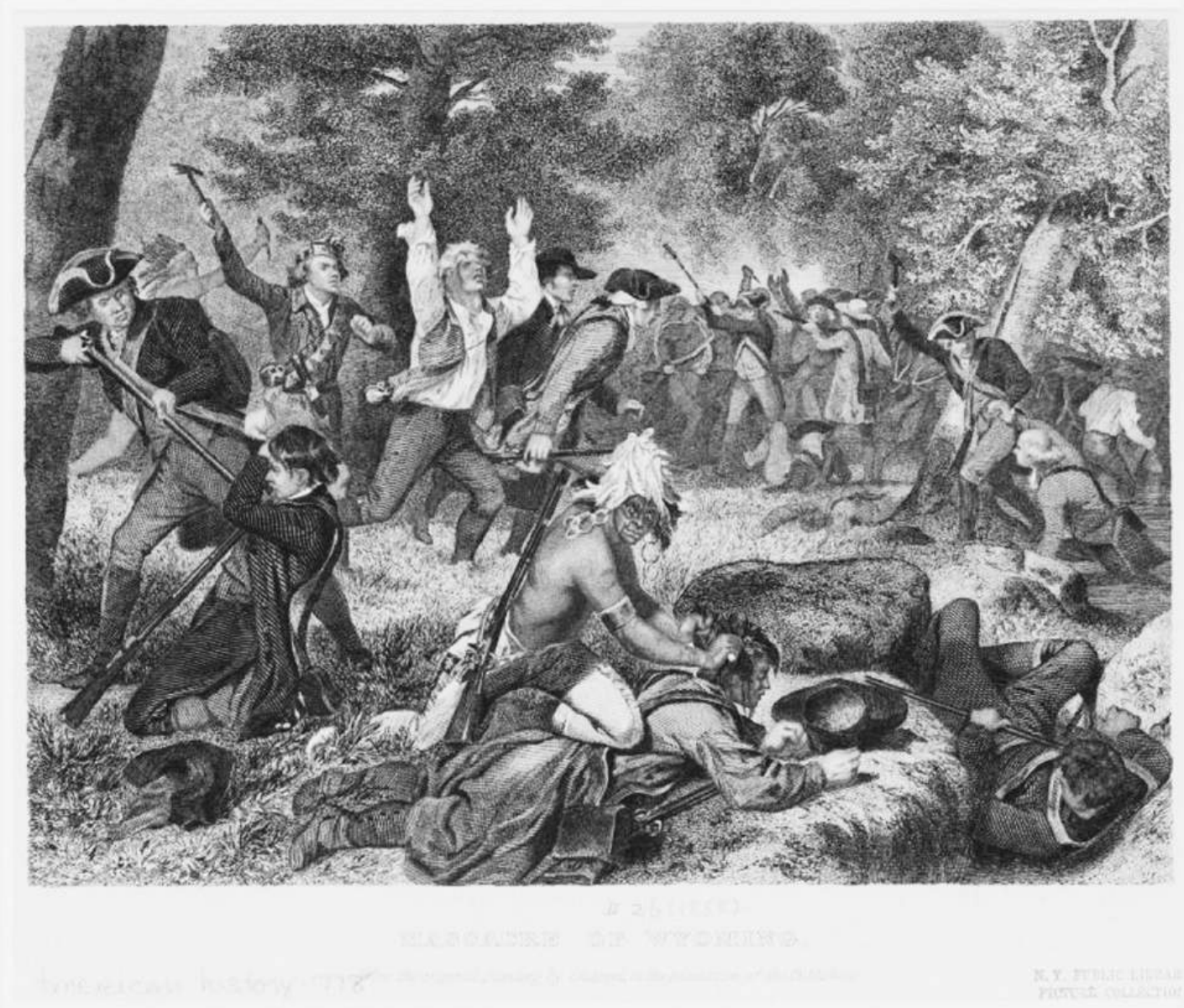
13. *The image is a detailed crop of an etching titled "Encampment of the Convention Army at Charlotte Ville in Virginia after they had surrendered to the Americans," created by Thomas Anburey, a British army officer captured during the Revolutionary War, published on January 1, 1789, by William Lane in London, contemporary sketch at https://www.continentalline.org/CL/article990202*

I used Claude.ai to help me analyze the pay vouchers and jury duty. I used it to help me revise and edit.

Article shared from https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/joel-and-christian-simms-revolutionary

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Anne Wendel



"Massacre of Wyoming" *The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Picture Collection, The New York Public Library.*

***Credit**: The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1858. https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/97a97460-c530-012f-07c6-58d385a7bc34*

KYLA BAYANG

1735–1778

Genealogy Librarian rounding up free tips for family history researching, heritage story writing and all the genealogy-related projects! Kyla maintains several blogs under the name https://Substack.com/@RootSquadRoundup, including RootSquadRoundup, ShipBrooklyn, In Search of Ogles, and more..

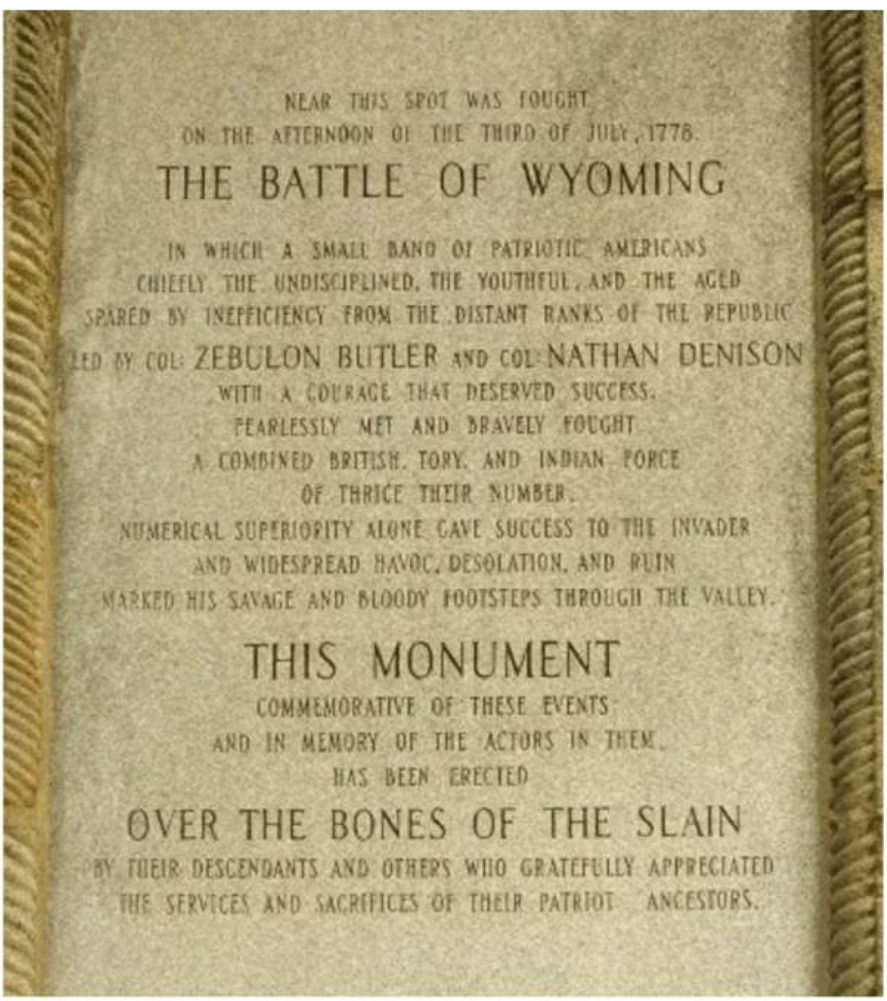
SCAN ME

RECORDED TALK

SCAN ME

INTRODUCING MY REVOLUTIONARY WAR PATRIOT, ELISHA RICHARDS

The Rest of the Story (so far!) My Journey to researching and understanding the Battle and Massacre of Wyoming, Pennsylvania


NEAR THIS SPOT WAS FOUGHT
ON THE AFTERNOON OF THE THIRD OF JULY, 1778.
THE BATTLE OF WYOMING
IN WHICH A SMALL BAND OF PATRIOTIC AMERICANS
CHIEFLY THE UNDISCIPLINED, THE YOUTHFUL, AND THE AGED
SPARED BY INEFFICIENCY FROM THE DISTANT RANKS OF THE REPUBLIC
LED BY COL: ZEBULON BUTLER AND COL: NATHAN DENISON
WITH A COURAGE THAT DESERVED SUCCESS,
FEARLESSLY MET AND BRAVELY FOUGHT
A COMBINED BRITISH, TORY, AND INDIAN FORCE
OF THRICE THEIR NUMBER.
NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY ALONE GAVE SUCCESS TO THE INVADER
AND WIDESPREAD HAVOC, DESOLATION, AND RUIN
MARKED HIS SAVAGE AND BLOODY FOOTSTEPS THROUGH THE VALLEY.
THIS MONUMENT
COMMEMORATIVE OF THESE EVENTS
AND IN MEMORY OF THE ACTORS IN THEM,
HAS BEEN ERECTED
OVER THE BONES OF THE SLAIN
BY THEIR DESCENDANTS AND OTHERS WHO GRATEFULLY APPRECIATED
THE SERVICES AND SACRIFICES OF THEIR PATRIOT ANCESTORS.

Inscription from the monument to those killed at the Battle and Massacre at Wyoming, PA, July 3rd, 1778.

My original Substack Stories250 post from July 3, 2025

"Fourteen years ago, a dear friend of mine asked to see my pedigree chart, to see if she could find me a patriot to apply to be in our local Daughters of the American Revolution chapter. It took her all of ten minutes to find that I was a direct descendant of Elisha Richards, who died on 3 July 1778 at the Battle of Wyoming. I said, "Wait. Wyoming was a state then?" NO. Wyoming is both a valley and a county in Pennsylvania. The state of Wyoming was named in honor of this battle. I did a deep research dive, and quickly found a 444 page tome, "Wyoming; Its History, Stirring Incidents, and Romantic Adventures." by George Peck, published in May 1858. In it are transcriptions of many interviews, as well as a detail of the efforts to create a Monument. I went searching for all the early resources, firsthand accounts and found the most accepted historians. Most information and sources are now online and in the public domain.

I believe that my 5th great-grandfather Elisha Richards, fell during the battle and is buried in the mass grave, as his name is on the monument. I have to admit that I have returned to this research many times, and very quickly the sadness of the accounts of that day overwhelm me, and I turn to other research lines.

As today starts our approach to America's 250th celebration next July 4, I want to dedicate some real time to being able to know as much as I possibly can about Elisha Richards and his service. And the story of survival of his wife, Sarah Cornwall, and their children, Rhoda (my ancestor), who was 13 years old at the time of the battle. There were 3 children younger than Rhoda. One family story is that Sarah and her children "fled through the forest and made their way back over 200 miles to the home of Elisha's father."

I want to dedicate some time to finding all these stories and other descendants. The older children might not have been with the family during the time of the battle.

There has been a Battle of Wyoming Commeration held every July 3rd since 1878, and a good number of them are posted on the Luzerne County Community YouTube Channel. Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice, the Pottsville Republican Herald, Times Leader, and several local T.V. news stations featured articles about the most recent one. Attending the Commeration is on my bucket list, perhaps in 2028."

In September 2025, as guest speaker on Barbara Tien's ProjectKin Live Stories250 Project, I verbally talked about my research journey so far. I was so nervous, I wasn't really happy with my storytelling, but I was (and am) completely honored to be able to be given the opportunity to tell and record it.

One family story is that she and her children fled through the forest and made their way back over 200 miles to the home of Elisha's father.

And now, June 2026, the research continues! I still find new things almost every time I sit down to look! Here's the tale, thus far:

Elisha Richards, son of Jedediah Richards and Amy Thrall, was born 18 July 1735 in Hartford, Connecticut. It is likely that Elisha spent all his early life near Hartford, as he was married on 10 November 1757 at Middletown, Connecticut, to Sarah Cornwall. Sarah was born 23 August 1733 to Wait Cornwall and Mercy Todd. Middletown is about 15 miles from Hartford. All I can glean from their early married lives is learned from other people's accounts, and the history books, as the records only provide the factual framework for their lives.

Shortly after their marriage, Elisha and Sarah moved to Norfolk, Connecticut where Elisha owned land. Six children were born to them there.

- Rebecca, 1 November 1758
- Abia, 4 January 1761
- Elisha, 3 October 1762
- Rhoda, 24 August 1765 → Kyla's 4th great-grandmother
- Solomon, 15 February 1767
- David, 24 August 1770

They lived in this vicinity at least 16 years, selling their home 20 December 1773. In 1774 the family moved to the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania which was being pioneered by settlers from both Connecticut and Pennsylvania, as each state claimed this area of land belonged to them.

It appears that Elisha and Sarah were quickly involved in building the community in Wilkes-Barre, as detailed in this story of a town meeting, and his service on the first school committee in December 1774.

> *"First School Meeting in Wilkes-Barre. Calvin Parsons is probably the best informed man in town as to early school matters. Upon inquiry being made of him as to when the first school meeting was held in Wilkes-Barre, he states as follows: On the 6th of December, 1774, a town meeting was called and Elisha Richards and Captain Parsons, Perrin Ross, Nathaniel Landon, Elisha Swift, Nathan Denison, Equ., Stephen Harding, John Jenkins, Anderson Dana, Obadiah Gore, Jr., James Stark, Rosewall Franklin, Caption Stewart, Captain Parks and Uriah Chapman were chosen school committee for the coming year."1*

Elisha and Sarah's seventh (and last) child, Mabel, was born the following year, on 24 December 1775.

Wyoming Valley was very lush, fertile land with the Susquehanna River running through on its 400 mile journey from up-state New York to the Chesapeake Bay. There was an abundance of wild birds and game animals. It is still an unbelievably beautiful area. I understand why Elisha and Sarah wanted to settle and raise their family there! The first early 40 settlers built a sturdy stockade which they called "Forty Fort". There were several other forts in the nearby area, all built to serve as protection, if it was needed.

A map from the Library of Congress from 1778 will show a bit of the terrain:2

The lovely area had almost constant ownership instability. Land disputes between original Native American peoples, Pennenites, and Connecticut settlers abounded. Some disputes were civil, some military, and some savage in nature.

On 9 December 1775 in Westmoreland, Elisha gave a deposition to Zebulon Butler, Justice of the Peace, that was later carried to the Continental Congress and presented on 18 December 1775, along with 7 other depositions detailing the gathering unrest between the

settlers of the Province of Pennyslvania (Penninites) and the "New Englanders" (Colony of Conneticut) who both settled along the River Susquehannah, and claimed the areas around Wyoming and Lackawack. 3

When the American Revolutionary War began to unfold, many young men had joined the Continental Army commanded by George Washington. Two companies of regulars, 82 men each, volunteered from the Wyoming Valley. Early in the winter, a group of Native Americans allied with Pennenites and Tories, and began a series of raids to farms north of the Wyoming Valley, and most settlers started to move inside the area forts or fled the area. As the war progressed and tensions in the Wyoming Valley increased, some of the regulars were sent home when word was sent from their families, but as we will see, many returned too late.

In summer 1778, approximately 1100 men consisting of 400 Tory Rangers and 700 Native Americans, stealthily entered the Wyoming valley under the command of Major John Butler. He had assembled this force at Niagara and marched south the length of the New York colony into Pennsylvania. Most of the settlers were gathered into Forty Fort by its commander, Captain Derrick Hewett, and Colonel Zebulon Butler, a Continental Army officer home on leave. As the British forces approached on 30 June, messengers had been sent from the fort to request help from headquarters at Albany, but it did not arrive, as other major battles were being fought there. Those inside the fort believed the number of the enemy was increasing, and would soon leave those inside the fort with no provisions.

On the morning of 3 July, the decision was made to attack rather than attempt to defend from inside the fort. Butler led his small garrison, about 300 men, mostly consisting of farmers and older militia regulars, against a force four times their number. They marched two miles up the Susquehanna River, and around 4pm, the battle commenced with approximately 30 minutes of exchange of volleys. The small force of settlers fought valiantly but were overpowered. The untrained and undisciplined men misunderstood a series of commands and thought they were instructed to retreat. Chaos ensued in the area throughout the night. Some were killed in action, some captured and killed, some hid and escaped. According to British accounts, the Native Americans had been promised payment for scalps and were paid for 227 of them. Elisha Richards was present and killed in the battle. No account details how or where

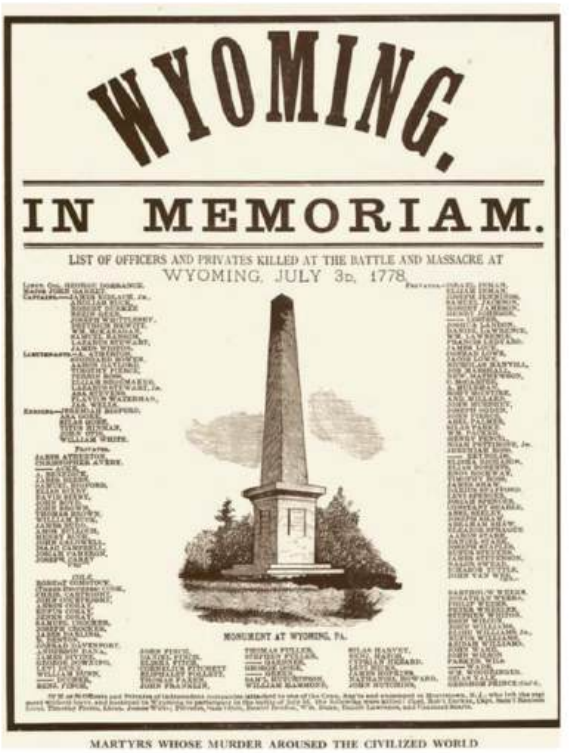
he gave his life, but his name was given among those accounted for as lost that day. In the aftermath, there were many stories of massacres, as well as all crops and homes being burned, animals driven off, and goods plundered. It is estimated that between 1000 and 1200 people fled into the mountains and down the river ahead of the plundering. Some were lost in the flight, never to be seen again. Others made due with no provisions to flee as quickly as they could to neighboring settlements.

Most of the bodies from the battle were left strewn across the battlefield. It took three months until October 1778 before a military party was able to get back into the valley to bury the remains properly in a common grave, and those remains later moved to their present site, and was later marked by the monument. The story of the monument is, in itself, a beautiful testimony to the resilience of the people of the Wyoming valley, and how deeply they care for the memory of these early settlers.

BATTLE OF WYOMING
Nearby on July 3, 1778, 300 patriots under Col. Zebulon Butler were defeated by 1100 British, Tories, and Indians with Maj. John Butler. Captives were massacred; survivors fled to Forty Fort.

Although I do not have exact details on his death, the name of Elisha Richards appears there with the others who fought so valiantly to defend their families and homes. The state of Wyoming was later named in honor of those who died in that battle.

There are many accounts now publicly available, some firsthand at the time and some recounted through numerous tellings. Some accounts are discounted as being embellished over time. As with all exhaustive research, one must examine all the sources, collaborate and evaluate, and we will never know for sure which parts are true facts and which are historical legend. Several facts remain: a battle conflict occurred, there are bodies under the Wyoming Monument, and bodies that were never found, and all their stories deserved to be remembered.


WYOMING.

IN MEMORIAM.

LIST OF OFFICERS AND PRIVATES KILLED AT THE BATTLE AND MASSACRE AT WYOMING, JULY 3d, 1778.

MONUMENT AT WYOMING, PA.

MARTYRS WHOSE MURDER AROUSED THE CIVILIZED WORLD

Poster about the memorial with the list of names.

My overarching research questions: "What happened to Sarah and the children in the immediate aftermath of the battle? How did they survive, where did they go and how did they get there?"

Sarah would have been 45 years old. Rebecca would have been 20, Abia 17, Elisha Jr 16, Rhoda 13, Solomon 11, David 8 and little Mable only 3 years old.

There are several versions of family lore passed down to separate branches in this line about what happened. Here is 'my' compiled gathered together version from descendants of Rhoda Richards Goodwin:

> *"Sarah Cornwall Richards gathered her children and escaped by hiding in a swamp known as "the shades of death" because the Native Americans were afraid of this swamp. Sarah and her children did not have any provisions with them but survived by living off the land as they traveled over 200 miles through the wilderness and through either the Delaware or Wind Gap pass of the Allegheny Mountains to return with her children to the home of her father-in-law, Jedediah Richards in Connecticut."4*

Another branch offered the following short version: "Elisha, Sarah, their oldest daughter Rebecca and several younger children were at the homestead close by Ft. Durkee that July day in 1778." I have yet to verify any of this.

The most detail I could find about the aftermath comes from this firsthand account given at the time:

William Gallop, on oath in the case of Van Horn vs. Dorrance says, "We were not to be plundered, but they plundered us of everything. The kept us three or four days, then told us to go. One hundred and eighty women and children, accompanied by only thirteen men, went together. They suffered extremely, all on foot, barefoot, bareheaded, in great want of provisions. Two women were delivered in the woods. Those of the men who had been in the battle made their escape before the fort surrendered, as the enemy said they would kill all that had been in the battle. About two hundred men were absent, serving in the Continental Army.

The greater part of the men, women and children had fled east and down the river on the night of the massacre. Crossing the river at Forty Fort, they plunged into the wilderness and made their way to the mountains. Many fled on the night of the 4th. The number of fugitives fleeing east from the Valley was about two thousand. The savages, finding they had fled, pursued them. Many were slain.

On the evening of the 5th, the advance party fell in with Capt. Spalding's company at Bear Swamp. On the morning of the 6th, Lient. Jenkins joined the company and they continued their march toward Wyoming. When they arrived at the top of the mountains, within sight of the valley, they halted and sent out parties to protect the fugitives, remained here engaged in this work for 2 or 3 days and fell into the rear of the fugitives, giving them food and helping them forward."[5]

After scouring all the available sources and the "official" stories told, as well as most of the writeup and critiques of the accounts, there seems to be no specific mention of the Richards family, other than Elisha's death.

And when were they found in later records? Few references were found (without true sources at this point!) in various online family histories:

Rufus Lawrence was appointed administrator of Elisha Richard's estate, Nov. 29, 1787, with James Bidlock and Nathan Tubbs on his bond for $400.

Mrs. Sarah Richards (widow of Elisha), and sons, David and Solomon, and daughters, Rhoda and Abiah, all lived in Middletown, Connecticut on August 27, 1791, when Lemuel Gaylord bought their interest in the Elisha Richards lands.

March 3, 1792, "Elisha Richards widow, Sarah, and seven children, all of whom were living, named in Orphans' court proceedings at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Elisha, Jr. oldest son, of Norfolk, Litchfield County, Conn January 22, 1790, sold his interest in his father's estate to Jeremiah Coleman. David was a cooper, in Middletown, Connecticut, Aug. 27, 1791. No other details are yet known of Solomon or Abiah, but they appear to be living in Middletown on 27 August 1791. Nothing further is known of Mabel, but she was not listed in the orphan's court record."

What do I know for sure? My 4th Great-grandma, Rhoda Richards, who was 13 at the time of the Massacre and flight in 1778, married Isaac Merrill Goodwin 27 March 1800 in Torrington, Connecticut, and they raised their family around New Haven and Hartford. As far as I can find, there is no surviving account from her.

One final piece of the story was found in a 1949 newspaper description of the family of Stephen Roberts, whose wife was Rebecca, the oldest daughter. She would have been 20 years old at the time of the Massacre, and 81 years old when the following was written about her memories:

> *"Mrs. Roberts often related sad memories of the never forgotten massacre of her father and many others of her acquaintenace and when more than four score years had worn on her physical and mental faculties, those sad tales would be rehearsed to interested listeners wtih vivid accuracy. The story of the flight of the bereaved other and orpaned children, of their destitution and endurance, would at times seemalmost incredible to those not acquainted with the truthfulness of the woman, but never doutbe dby any who knew her well. But many widowed women, with their helpless children clinging to their garments, sobbing in all the bitterness of the orphan's woe, accompained the bereft family of Elisha Richards, or sought safety from the tomahawk and scalping knofe by other paths, paths traced in later years by the unburied bones of the fugitives, which haste and insufficient means for proper burial compelled them to be left uncovered or but slightly hidden."6*

My true heroine of the story is Sarah Cornwall Richards, who picked up her children and somehow managed to survive to escape, then raise her children as a veteran's widow, without ever receiving compensation for his service, and lived to be 69 years old. She passed away 10 July 1802 at Middlesex, Connecticut. I have yet to find where she is laid to rest.

My next research goal is to trace all of the children and descendants, and see if I can find some of them via DNA matching. Perhaps we can find her and see that her grave is properly marked and cared for. If you have found this story, and you are a descendant, please reach out to me, I'd love to talk to you!
Thank you for taking the time to read what I have uncovered about Elisha and Sarah's story so far, and to help keep the memories of our Revolution and their sacrifices when building our country alive for "America 250"!

FOOTNOTES

1. *"The Historical Record Volume 5, a Quarterly Publication Devoted Principally to the Early History of Wyoming Valley and Contiguous Territory with Notes and Queries, Biographical, Antiquarian and Genealogical." Edited by F.C. Johnson, Wilkes-Barre, PA; Press of the Wilkes-Barre Record 1895. Page 168.*

2. *Homann Erben & Sauthier, C. J. (1778) Mappa geographica Provinciæ Nova Eboraci ab Anglis New-York dictæ ex ampliori delineatione ad exactas dimensiones concinnata in arctius spatium redacta cura Claudii Josephi Sauthier cui accedit Nova Jersey ex topographicis observationibus. Norimbergæ. [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/74692774/.*

3. *"United States records," images, FamilySearch (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS84-JLDC?view=explore : Aug 22, 2025), image 1495 of 1608; Image Group Number: 007953531*

   "American Archives, Fourth Series containing a Documentary History of the English Colonies in North American from the King's message to Parliament, of March 7, 1774 to The Declaration of Independence of the United States, by Peter Force. Volume 3. Published by M. St. Clair Clarke and Peter Force, under authority of an Act of Congress, passed on the second of March, 1833." 3rd volume of the fourth series, created Washington, D.C., December 22, 1840. "Continental Congress, December 30, 1725". Page 1966-1967 (Images 1594-1595 of 1608)

4. *Dare I put a source here called, "Family Lore"? Bit pieces and parts of this were told to the author by at least 6 other Richards/Goodwin descendants. How much is true or not, I can only guess and use as clues.*

5. *Jenkins, Steuben. "Historical Address at the Wyoming Monument 3d of July 1878 on the 100th Anniversary of the Battle and Massacre of Wyoming", pages 53-54.*

6. August 5, 1949. The Mountain Echo, Shickshinny, Pennsylvania, page 2.

This article was originally published at https://rootsquadroundup.substack.com/p/introducing-my-revolutionary-war-205

SCAN ME SCAN ME SCAN ME SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Kyla Bayang

DIANE BURLEY

Author, journalist, mom of two sons. I braid lost moments of history, what has us wincing, and personal experience to offer stories with heart, hope, and humor — because God knows we need all three. I'm always looking for the light..

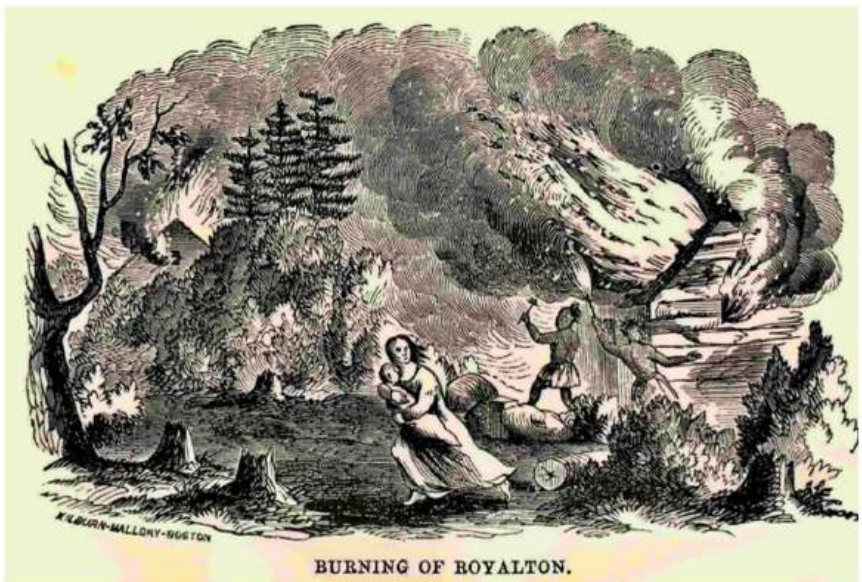
Diane blogs at "Musings of a Storyteller" at https://dianeburley.substack.com

SCAN ME

1737–1797

RAID OF ROYALTON

The Barn That Didn't Burn



19th Century woodengraving by Samuel Smith Kilburn and his partner Richard P. Mallory of Boston, noted for illustrating war periodicals. Photo courtesy of The Historical Marker Database.

I feel like I have started several of these essays with "the news is grim." Most everyone I know starts their day with a cringy-peek at yesterday's events – to quickly jump to something else to distract themselves. I wish my Buffalo Bills and Buffalo Sabres were doing better. It's not helping that the darkening days are ushering in the cold; I want to withdraw from life.

But in researching my 5th great grandmother, Lucy Anna "Anna" Durkee (b.1737), I have discovered how running and hiding is only a short-term solution. Here is another story about my Revolutionary War relatives.

The Ryersons and Posts were in New Jersey, while the Durkess/Tuckers were in Vermont. Marvin Tucker returned to New Hampshire for a bit, but his daughter Sarah and Stephen left for New York.

The harvest was over, so it may have been tempting for Anna Durkee to stay beneath the quilt in her warm bed. However, with a deeply ingrained Protestant upbringing, she had an immediate chore; the fire needed coaxing from slumbering embers. She pulled herself from bed, slipped on boots and pulled on a shawl.

Her husband Timothy had risen earlier, awakened by the dogs barking. He rose worried about the fate of the sheep. After church the day before, he and the eldest son Heman, were staking out acreage for their son Heman's pending home – when they spotted wolf scat.

Anna was used to being left alone to run the home and raise her children. Originally from Connecticut, the Durkees moved to Hanover, New Hampshire, where Timothy was heavily involved in town proceedings. He bore the title of lieutenant, likely from the French and Indian wars and now with Hanover's militia. The town elected him to both engage men and procure ammunition for the militia. He would eventually be on the muster rolls in Vermont as well.

Nestled between loyalists in Canada and those still in Massachusetts, New Hampshire's militia was being called into battles including the Pine Tree Riot (1772), Fort William and Mary raid (1774), Battle of Bunker Hill (1775). The town had successfully chased away not one but two New Hampshire royalist governors who hailed from the aristocratic Wentworth family.

Still, Anna was pregnant with her seventh child as revolutionary war tensions escalated. Timothy joined more committees ... and more meetings took place at the Durkee home. It's understandable then, that after their daughter Lorena was born, the Durkees took advantage of the land grants they purchased years earlier that were west of the Connecticut River to escape it all.

They, and approximately 25-30 other families, moved to a lush parcel of land along the White River. It is here that the Green Mountains spilled out onto the valley, literally cradling the new towns of Royalton and South Royalton. The abundance of timber and water made "caring" for these infant towns arduous; clearing the land, creating the infrastructure, raising houses, planting crops. Shortly after moving, they had their eighth child, their sixth son, Jireh.

When chartering new areas, settlers must abide by certain stipulations within a set period of time including having a certain number of settlers, cultivating the land, building roads, and paying taxes. It included supporting the forts in both Royalton and in Bethel, Vermont, with provisions and men.

Unbeknownst to the new settlers, the land "west of the Connecticut River" was in an area called Vermont, that had been ceded to the British Crown by the defeated French. But the crown hadn't decided if it belonged to New York or New Hampshire. In an audacious grift, then Royal Governor Wentworth, sold land grants to line his pockets. The new settlers found themselves in a custody dispute over who owned the land.

Despite the legal challenges, and the presence of forts, the settlers of Royalton thought they were immune from the revolution still brewing around them. Little did they know, that on this October 16, 1780 morning, vengeance was about to descend on them.

Post includes voiceover version at https://dianeburley.substack.com/p/raid-of-royalton-lucy-anna-durkee

SCAN ME

Per usual, Anna went to the stove to rake the coals, then to the front door to retrieve wood. It was just before daybreak with enough light for her to gaze at the seemingly endless silhouettes of trees, pines and oaks, that wrapped around their property and ascended to the heavens. Her faith gave her strength, particularly after Lorena's death, at Christmas time a year ago.

She loved early morning. As a child, Anna learned that daybreak signifies God's constant mercy, which is "new every morning" (Lamentations 3:23). Lost in her thoughts, her reverie was shattered by the sound of thundering hooves and loud voices.

"Run! The Indians are at the mill!" a neighbor was shouting.1

Instantly alert, she instinctively called for her children. But only Lucy, almost 14 (and my 4x great grandmother) appeared, rubbing her eyes. Anna's older sons, Heman and Timothy Jr, had left for Bethel the night before for supplies, and Sheldon, Andrew, and Adan were probably with their father at the barn. There was no time to wonder.2

"Get on your boots and your cloak and grab blankets, and start for the woods. I'll get the baby."

Anna had lived through Indian raids in the past — though not since becoming a mother. Hiding in the woods was their only chance.

She grabbed little Jireh who was starting to cry, placed a sock in his mouth to muffle the sound. She grabbed a tin cup, some bread, a knife, mending kit, some tea towels and opium, and threw them all onto the table cloth to bundle together, and sling over her shoulder. Lucy Ann was already by the door, her eyes wide with fear. Anna shushed her and told her to run North over the ridge.

She couldn't know that as she and two of her seven children ran for the ridge, that a battalion of Brits had descended from Canada. Their little town was targeted because of a grudge held by a man who had been imprisoned nearby. The battle of Saratoga in 1777 had been a turning point in the war when the Americans defeated General Burgoyne. This soldier now wanted revenge and had laid out a plan with the British leader Horton and a French lieutenant LeMott.3

The three conspired to exploit the anger of the indigenous people – the Abenaki, Mohawk, and Mahican nations upset by the interlopers who now hunted and fished on lands that they had cultivated for centuries. The trio enticed more than 300 natives to join the attack on Royalton, Sharon, and Townsend. The British would take prisoners, while the natives would be free to take children to be adopted by their tribes. It was understood that babies and women would not be targeted.

There was no time to wonder

"Get on your boots and your cloak and grab blankets, and start for the woods. I'll get the baby."

But humans being human didn't conform in terms of morality. Some can show compassion and kindness. Some embrace evil.

A musket fired and Anna prayed it was Timothy signaling, and urged Lucy further into the woods. The whooping and shouting grew closer. Drenched from crossing a ravine, and exhausted, she peered from the bushes, to see the Indians descend on their house.

The bellowing and shrieks of cattle being slaughtered filled the air. A valley within mountains provides the perfect acoustics for echoes. The screaming – a cacophony of both joy and terror – surrounded and sickened her. Concerned the attackers might hear the baby, and having caught her breath, she motioned her daughter to keep moving further uphill into the trees.

They climbed until the sounds finally faded. In the thick of the woods, she saw a fallen tree, and set up a camp next to it, pulling branches around the three of them. She and Lucy began reciting prayers.

She couldn't know that her nearest neighbor, Mrs. Stevens, clad only in a nightgown and holding her baby, also was sheltering nearby. General Stevens' wife had been spared from having her throat slit when the warrior saw a gold necklace. Using his knife to cut that off instead, he told her "begone or they would burn."

She didn't know of two young men, who had been killed and scalped. And she didn't know that her sons Adan, Sheldon, and Andrew all had been taken captive – caught in the new barn that they had recently erected. When the warriors finished rifling through the Durkee home, they set it ablaze. When they tried to burn the barn as well, the new wood was too green to allow it to catch.

The wood for the Durkee barn was too green to burn. Photo courtesy "The History of Royalton Vermont"

And she definitely didn't know that her neighbor Hannah Hendee, 27, mother of Michael around age 7, and a daughter a bit younger, was about to undertake an act of heroism that no man could have accomplished.

Hannah's husband had urged her to take refuge at a neighbor's while he took off to Bethel by horse to get help. She was soon surrounded, and poor Michael was carried away by warriors intent on "making him a soldier." She had no intention of losing her son. With daylight she could see Tories mixed in among the tribes along the water. The commanding officer was across the river. She needed to find a way to ford it with her young daughter.

She was stopped by an older Indian who didn't speak the language. She motioned she needed to cross. For whatever reason he decided to help her. And she decided to take it. She gave him her wailing child, whom he carried across to safety – and then returned for her. On that side of the bank, she looked for and found the commanding British officer. She confronted him about the kidnapped children – and said they would never make it on foot to Quebec. That he would have their blood on his hands.

I tried to imagine this confrontation.

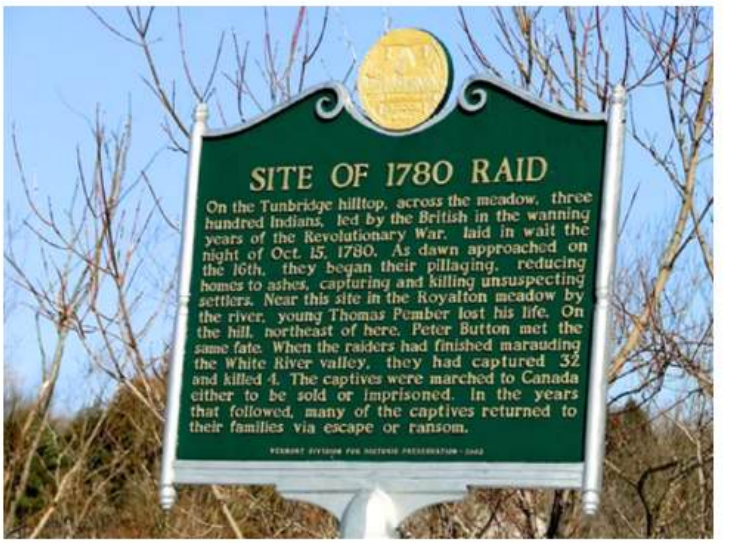
- Did she quote from Jonathan Edwards, threatening him with the fires of hell?
- Did she cry to appeal to his emotions?
- Did she mock his manhood when he said the Indians wouldn't listen to him?

However, she acted, whatever she did, she spooked Horton so that he finally motioned to the warriors to let her son go. But she wasn't done. She saw several more of her young neighbors and demanded their release as well. In all, Hannah negotiated for the release of seven more boys that included Sheldon, 9, and Andrew Durkee, age 11. Andrew was lame due to a portion of his leg bone removed from a fever sore, and thus the natives found him "no good."

t's not known how long Anna, Lucy, and Jireh stayed in the woods. An account by another neighbor said "a deep snow" covered the still-smoldering homes the next day. But whenever they did return, Anna no doubt roller-coasted through emotions: shock in seeing her home burned to the ground; joy in discovering what Hannah had done for her – and the horror of having her older son Adan captured

– just two weeks before his 19th birthday. He was one of 26 prisoners marched to Quebec. All but Adan were released; he died in prison in Montreal.

THE ROYALTON RAID
October 16, 1780
To terrorize the valley from Tunbridge to Royalton, nearly 300 Indians led by a British officer fell on these defenseless frontier settlements, killing 4, taking 26 prisoners, & reducing Royalton to ashes. The captives hauled back to Canada were sold for $8.00 a head. This was the most calamitous of Vermont's many Indian raids.


SITE OF 1780 RAID
On the Tunbridge hilltop, across the meadow, three hundred Indians, led by the British in the wanning years of the Revolutionary War, laid in wait the night of Oct. 15, 1780. As dawn approached on the 16th, they began their pillaging, reducing homes to ashes, capturing and killing unsuspecting settlers. Near this site in the Royalton meadow by the river, young Thomas Pember lost his life. On the hill, northeast of here, Peter Button met the same fate. When the raiders had finished marauding the White River valley, they had captured 32 and killed 4. The captives were marched to Canada either to be sold or imprisoned. In the years that followed, many of the captives returned to their families via escape or ransom.

Highway markers in Royalton commemorating the site. Photos courtesy of the Historical Marker Database.

The barn that didn't burn housed the family through the winter until they could rebuild their house over spring and summer. Anna would have another child in 1783, the year the Revolutionary War officially ended.

Like today, the news was unsettled. In all, more than 20 homes, cattle and barns filled with food to "last a year" were destroyed. Four men were killed, more than two dozen men were taken prisoner, during which Adan died. To survive, neighbors shared food, belongings, tears, and no doubt, comfort.

We like to think we are an island – until something goes terribly wrong. What saved the survivors—and saves us—is community, not retreat. Of all the crops they planted, turns out the community they cultivated was what really mattered.

Article shared from dianeburley.substack.com/p/raid-of-royalton-lucy-anna-durkee

SCAN ME

PRIMARY SOURCES

- *"The Burning of Royalton Vermont." Dunklee, Ivah; Steele, Zadock, 1758-1845, G.H. Ellis Co. Boston.*
- *"The History of Royalton Vermont with Family Genealogies, 1769-1911" Lovejoy, Mary Evelyn Wood. Burlington, Vt., Free Press Print. Co. 1911*
- *"240 Years Ago: The Raid on Royalton Vermont," Woodstock History Center, November 9, 2020*
- *"The records of the town of Hanover, New Hampshire, 1761-1818." Town of Hanover, 1905.*

Copyright 2026 Diane Burley

FOOTNOTES

1. *Zadock Steele was captured and imprisoned by the British. Years later he provides a first-hand account of men on horseback trying to give warning. He also states that people ran to the woods. The Durkees lived on land adjacent to the Stevens. The account of General Stevens wife was recorded. But the issues around the Durkees — other than the capturing of their children and the burning of the barn and house are vague.*

   There were three possible courses of action Anna could take on that morning: be captured by the Indians and have her sons taken in front of her; run to the woods for safety; escape on a horse. But the accounts of people on horseback were of those already on the road who saw the pillaging from a far, so I omitted that. Because her daughter Lucy was not captured, I don't believe she was in the house — and opted for her to have run into the woods..

2. *Land records show that Timothy Jr, Heman and even Adan had parcels of land as well. Muster records show that Timothy and Heman also were enrolled to take supplies to the Fort in Bethel. Since these two were not captured, I inferred that they were out of town at the time of the raid. It is also possible they escaped into the woods.*

3. *"The Burning of Royalton, Vermont by Indians" from the Internet Archive, p. 10 archive.org/details/burningofroyalto0000unse/page/n19/mode/2up*

This article was originally published at https://dianeburley.substack.com/p/raid-of-royalton-lucy-anna-durkee

Copyright 2026 Diane Burley

DEBORAH CARL

1738–1827

EBENEZER BANCROFT — KILLED IN A TRAIN ACCIDENT

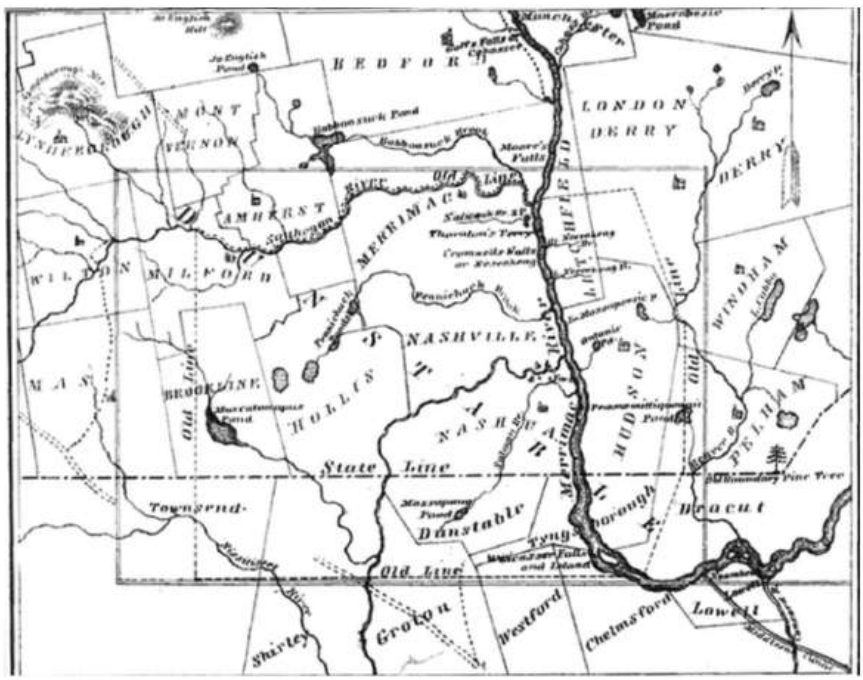
Court Ruled He Knew the Risk: Continuing the Stories of Those Buried in the Woodlawn Cemetery, Nashua, New Hampshire. Stories 250

Deborah blogs from https://YourFamilyQuest.com and her Substack publication of the same name. She also edits the Tips blog for https://MissionGenealogy.org.

SCAN ME

Deborah includes a video from her "Your Family Quest" YouTube channel at https://youtube.com/watch?v=Om9xpoaUtLg

SCAN ME



Charles J. Fox, History of the old township of Dunstable: including Nashua, Nashville, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, and Merrimac, N. H.; Dunstable and Tyngsborough, Mass. (Nashua, NH: Charles T. Gill, 1846), map between 14 and 15; Library of Congress.

There is no marker for the grave of Ebenezer Bancroft the Fourth, but the Woodlawn Cemetery records say he is buried in Range 18, Lot 56. This is the grassy area between the Cady Family Stone at Lot 52 and the rough-hewn Holt Family Stone and the large Barnes Family Stone at Lots 59 and 60.1

Ebenezer the Fourth was the only son of Ebenezer Bancroft the Third and Jane Redfield. He and his twin sister were born in 1846 in Tyngsboro, Massachusetts. The Bancrofts were one of the early settlers of Dunstable, Massachusetts, which was incorporated in 1673, and was comprised of 200 square miles reaching from present-day Londonderry, New Hampshire, to Chelmsford, Massachusetts. In the 1700s, the town was broken into 15 communities.2

Ebenezer the Third was probably named after his grandfather, Ebenezer Bancroft, who served in the War of Independence and attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Ebenezer Senior was living in that part of Dunstable which became Tyngsboro in 1809. He had been involved in his community and had served as a selectman in 1768 until there was a motion in March 1771 to dismiss him as a selectman and assessor for the town. In 1772, he was serving as a warden and highway surveyor for the town. And then he served as a selectman and assessor again from 1773 to 1774.3

The Battle of Lexington (Boston: John H. Daniels & Son, 1903), print form engraving; Library of Congress. Image colorized using MyHeritage.com

On April 12th, 1775, the town voted to assess 20 pounds for the encouragement and use of the minutemen and to hold themselves ready to march at the first notice. That notice wasn't long in coming. On April 19th, news arrived that there had been fighting in Lexington and Concord. The battles were done before the men from Dunstable could respond. But they were present for the Battle of Bunker Hill. Ebenezer Bancroft served as a Captain under Col. Ebenezer Bridge.4

John Trumbull, Battle of Bunker Hill (Detroit Publishing Co., 1912), glass negative; Library of Congress. Image colorized using MyHeritage.com

Ebenezer Sr. was a veteran of the French and Indian War, and upon finding himself surrounded by British soldiers during the battle, he used his musket as a club and knocked down several British soldiers. He lost his musket in the fight, and the forefinger of his right hand was shot off, but he continued to serve in the War of Independence.5

His son Ebenezer Jr. was born in 1778 and spent his life farming the land in Tyngsborough. He married Hannah Town in 1804 in Washington, New Hampshire, and their son, Ebenezer the Third, was born in 1807 in Tyngsborough, Massachusetts. Ebenezer the Third married Jane Keyser in 1835 in Portland, Maine, and they occupied the house Ebenezer Senior had purchased from Henry Farwell in Tyngsboro. In 1870, the farm was worth $5,500 with about $2,000 worth of personal items. He was wealthier than most of his neighbors.6

Ebenezer the Fourth was 24 years old when he married the 18-year-old Carolyne Nichols in 1871 in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. Their first known child was born in Tyngsboro in 1873, but Minnie Bancroft died as a child, and their second daughter, Lillie Bancroft, was born in 1878 in Tyngsborough and died in February of 1880 of congestion of the brain in Nashua, New Hampshire. Perhaps this was what caused the family to separate. In 1880, Ebenezer was living with his parents without Carolyne. But whatever the reason for the separation, they got back together, and their third and last child, Ebenezer Luther Bancroft, was born on January 1st, 1882, in Nashua.7

Edward E. Parker, History of the City of Nashua, N.H. From the Earliest Settlement of Old Dunstable to the Year 1895, (Nashua, NH: Telegraph Publishing Company, 1897), 479; Nashua Public Library.

Ebenezer the Fourth had been working for the railroad for about four years when on February 10th, 1891, he was working with a crew of six men and riding on the front footboard of the engine as it pulled off of Hollis Street and onto the Walnut Street siding. A baker driving a sleigh attempted to cross in front of the train, and one of the crewmen called, "Whoa." The engineer immediately worked to stop the train, but it took 60 feet. The engineer said, "I saw a horse and front part of a baker's sleigh." The sleigh was broken in half, and the baker was lying in the road. Bancroft was asked to help move the engine back so that the wreck of the sleigh could be moved away. The engineer noticed he hesitated and saw he was looking pale, asked him if he was hurt, and Ebenezer said 'Not Much.' The engineer reported, "He was a man of very few words and said he was squeezed, but thought he was not badly hurt." The accident had happened in the afternoon, and Ebenezer the Fourth died the following morning at about 9 am. An autopsy showed that the lining of the bowels was torn, and the walls of the stomach were badly injured. The doctor concluded that the injuries were undoubtedly the cause of his death.8

Ebenezer's family filed a case against the Boston & Maine Railroad for causing his death, but the court ruled Ebenezer was entirely familiar with all the dangers and needed no warning. He assumed his own risk and was responsible for the loss of his life.9

Jill Westeyn, "One Hundred Years of Silver Dollar Coinage (1878-1978)," 15 April 2021, photo of Morgan Obverse; United States Mint.

On June 22nd, 1891, Ebenezer the Third wrote his will. His son had died in February of that year, and the will stated that his grandson, Ebenezer Luther Bancroft, was to receive the heirloom Bancroft Cane. After leaving a gold watch to his daughter Sarah E. Brown and a dollar to his daughter Hannah Jane Bills, his grandson, Frederick A. Brown was to hold the remainder of the estate in trust for the use of Ebenezer's widow, Jane Redfield Bancroft, until her death or remarriage, and then the estate was to be divided 1/8th to grandson Charles Edwin Drake, 1/8th to grandson Ebenezer Luther Bancroft, and the remaining three-quarters to daughter Sarah E. Brown. Looks like Ebenezer the Third was not happy with his daughter, Hannah Jane Bills.10

Ebenezer the Fourth's 38-year-old widow, Carolyne, moved to Wilmington, Middlesex, Massachusetts, where she was keeping house. She met George Eames, a 54-year-old farmer living in Wilmington, and she did what most widows with young children did – she married again. George and Carolyn were married on January 28th, 1892, in Wilmington, Massachusetts, providing Ebenezer the Fourth's 10-year-old son with a stepfather to help raise and care for him.11

FOOTNOTES

1. *Nashua, New Hampshire, Woodlawn, Edgewood, Pinewood, and Evergreen Cemetery Search, database, Nashua, search for Ebenezer Bancroft.*

2. *Tyngsborough, Middlesex, Massachusetts, Births, vol. 23, 1847, 83, entries 3 & 4 together on the same line, Sarah Ellen & Ebenezer Bancroft recorded 10 July 1847, born 14 October 1846; FamilySearch. Also, Susan Tully and Susan Psaledakis, Dunstable, Images of America, 1998; quoted at Town of Dunstable Massachusetts.*

3. *Elias Nason, A History of the Town of Dunstable, Massachusetts, From Its Earliest Settlement to the Year of Our Lord 1873 (Boston: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1877), p. 113-114, p. 141, p. 234; Library of Congress. Also, Dunstable, Middlesex, Massachusetts, Town Book of Records, 1744-1790, 182, meeting held 11 March 1768, selectman Ebenezer Bancroft certifies with two other selectmen that Joseph Danforth was sworn in as Town Clerk and Assessor; FamilySearch. And Dunstable, Middlesex, Massachusetts, Town Book of Records, 1744-1790, 223, meeting held 7 March 1771, the Freeholders and other inhabitants of the town voted to dismiss Ebenezer Bancroft as selectman and assessor & 229, meeting held 2 March 1772, the Freeholders and other Inhabitants choose Ebenezer Bancroft as a warden & 230, meeting held 2 March 1772, the Freeholders and other Inhabitants choose Ebenezer Bancroft as a surveyor of the highway & 253, meeting held 7 March 1774, the Freeholders and other Inhabitants choose Ebenezer Bancroft as a selectman and assessor.*

4. *Dunstable, Middlesex, Massachusetts, Town Book of Records, 1744-1790, the numbering jumps from 253 to 234 and resumes, second 253 penciled in number 272, meeting held 12 April 1775, the Freeholders of Dunstable voted to raise money for the Minutemen; FamilySearch. Also, Elias Nason, A History of the Town of Dunstable, Massachusetts, From Its Earliest Settlement to the Year of Our Lord 1873 (Boston: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1877), 112-113; Library of Congress.*

5. *Elias Nason, A History of the Town of Dunstable, Massachusetts, From Its Earliest Settlement to the Year of Our Lord 1873 (Boston: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1877), 114 & 141; Library of Congress. Also, Biographical Review: Containing Life Sketches of Leading Citizens of Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Boston, Massachusetts: Biographical Review Publishing Company, 1898), 197–198, Colonel Ebenezer Bancroft; FamilySearch.*

6. *Dunstable, Middlesex, Massachusetts, Births, Marriages, Deaths & Intentions, 32, approximately 1724-1802, Ebenezer Bancroft born 19 October 1778; FamilySearch. Also, New Hampshire Index to Marriages, (Bi-Bn) Britton to Bancroft, card for Ebenezer Bancroft and Hannah Towne, 12 March 1804; FamilySearch. Also, "Transcript from a former book of Records of the town of Tyngsborough," Middlesex, Massachusetts, undated, first page, record of Eben[ezer is crossed out] Bancroft Jr. with Hannah, his wife, and their children; FamilySearch. And Portland, Cumberland, Maine, Record of Intentions & Marriages, 1814–1855, vol. 4, 64, Return of Marriage solemnized by Rev. J. W. Chickering, entry for Ebenezer Bancroft and Jane Kezar, 22 December 1835; FamilySearch. And 1870 U.S. census, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Tyngsborough, 8, dwelling 70, family 71, Ebenezer Bancroft household; FamilySearch.*

7. *Chelmsford, Middlesex, Massachusetts, Register of Marriages, 1854–1888, folio 24, Ebenezer Bancroft Jr. [his birth was around 1847 making him Ebenezer the Fourth] and Carrie A. Nichols, 5 July 1871; FamilySearch. Also, Hampden to Plymouth County, Massachusetts, Births, 1873, Vol. 251, Births Registered in the Town of Tyngsborough, 306, Minnie Aredell Bancroft, 3 February 1873; FamilySearch. And Nashua, Hillsborough, New Hampshire, Deaths, Original Certificates, 1864–1915, chronological order, Lillie Bancroft, 10 February 1880; FamilySearch. And, 1900 U.S. census, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Reading, ED 917, Sheet 10B, dwelling 153, family 170, George Eames household; FamilySearch. The census states Carrie and George Eames had been married for eight years. That Carrie was the mother of one child (Luther E Bancroft, age 18, listed as George Eames' stepson) and only had one living child. It appears Carrie left out the two daughters. Lillie died in 1880, and while a death record was not located for Minnie, she was probably deceased. And 1880 U.S. census, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Tyngsborough, ED 380, p. 6, dwelling 54, family 60, Ebenezer Bancroft household; FamilySearch. And Nashua, Hillsborough, New Hampshire, Births, Marriages, Deaths, Vol. 12, Births registered for the year ended 31 March 1882, folio 15, Luther A. Bancroft, 1 January 1882; FamilySearch. Luther A. Bancroft appears as Eben L. Bancroft in the index cards. See New Hampshire Birth Index Cards, Ball to Bond, arranged by surname, alphabetically by the 1st and 3rd letters, card for Eben L. Bancroft, 1 January 1882; FamilySearch.*

8. *"Ebenezer Bancroft's Death: Hearing on it Before Railroad Commission, Testimony of Those Who Witnessed the Sad Affair," Nashua Daily Telegraph (Nashua, New Hampshire), Tuesday, 3 March 1891, p. 4, col. 4; Community History Archive.*

9. *"The Railroad Won," Nashua Daily Telegraph (Nashua, New Hampshire), Monday, 31 July 1893, p. 6, col. 4, Community History Archive.*

10. *Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Probate Record, Vol. 514, 1891, 485, Will of Ebenezer Bancroft of Tyngsborough, 22 June 1891; FamilySearch.*

11. *Wilmington, Middlesex, Massachusetts, Births, Marriages, Deaths, 1843–1900, Marriages Registered in the Town of Wilmington for the year of 1892, folio 46, George J. Eames and Carrie A. Bancroft, 28 January 1892; FamilySearch.*

Article shared from https://yourfamilyquest.substack.com/p/ebenezer-bancroft

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Deborah Carl

The December 16, 1773 Boston Tea Party, led by Samuel Adams and Sons of Liberty, has become a mainstay of American patriotic lore.
Learn more: https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/boston-tea-party/

Credit: *W.D. Cooper. "Boston Tea Party.", The History of North America. London: E. Newberry, 1789.Engraving. Plate opposite p. 58. Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (40). Public Domain.*

LINDA STUFFLEBEAN

Linda is an avid genealogy researcher and blogger. She has been a family history researcher since 1979. She blogs daily at https://emptybranchesonthefamily tree.com and has occasionally posted to Substack.

SCAN ME

1740–1819

JOHN ADAMS & THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The Other Side of the Story

No, this isn't about John Adams, American Patriot and second President of the newly formed United States of America.

No, this story is about John Adams, my ancestor, who definitely wasn't famous or influential in history. But he stood up for his beliefs.

I've decided to write about John Adams because, recently, another blogger and I had a short discussion about whether life was better or worse for those who gave up all and removed to (then) Nova Scotia.

I don't think that most of us spend much time thinking about the topic, but to understand the life stories of Loyalist ancestors, it's a topic that needs to be explored.

First, let's look at colonial America in the mid-18th century. We had just gone through the French and Indian War in the 1760s and the English government decided to raise taxes on its American colonists. That was the step that eventually led to all-out war during the American Revolution.

As the prospect of war crept closer in the 1770s, who comprised the base of Tories supporting the king and the English government? For the most part, Tories were fairly well-to-do men who felt they had more to lose supporting the rebels than the king. Some, of course, didn't care either way and just wanted to be left alone, so got lumped in with those opposed to independence.

Tories included large land owners, well off tradesmen and businessmen who had global interests and government officials. In short, the Tories who became Loyalists, moving their families to the wilds of Canada, often had a lot to lose.

The area of Nova Scotia that was set off as the new province of New Brunswick was wild with very few settlers. In fact, my pre-Loyalist ancestors from Rhode Island were enticed to pack up and move there in the 1760s with offers of land.

Think of New England, with more inclement weather, in the 1620s, when the Mayflower passengers arrived. There was nothing there.

Although Parrtown, now Saint John, was quickly established in New Brunswick and there were thousands of people there because of the Loyalist population, the outskirts were empty. Unless a man with needed skills in Saint John was able to start over and be reasonably successful in town, it meant that men took their families to the frontier.

Houses and businesses needed to be built and communities established.

Life was hard. For sure.

Now, let's look at my John Adams.

Although there are some vital records in 1700s Connecticut, no birth record has been found for John, born c1740, or his older brother, David, born c1736. They were sons of David Adams (born 8 February 1718/19-1 December 1796) and Susannah Lockwood (born c1718; died 6 June 1747).

With the death of their mother in 1747, David's and John's father married (2) Sarah Squire on 2 November 1748 and had two more sons and five more daughters, creating a large blended family.

The family lived in Fairfield County, Connecticut, a prosperous area not far from New York City. It was a hotbed of Loyalist activity and home to many, many families with split loyalties - those who supported the king and those in favor of independence.

The Adams clan was no exception. John grew up and married Sarah Coley, from another Fairfield County family, on 31 August 1765. Some of his Adams relatives, including members of his mother's Lockwood family, were known Tories, as were some of wife Sarah's Coley family.

What his father thought of John's decision is unknown. The records are silent.

Tensions must have been high as the threat of war got closer. It's not likely that being on opposing political sides ever brought the idea of leaving the colonies permanently to anyone's mind. After all, the immigrant Adams ancestor, Edward Adams, settled in New Milford, Connecticut by 1640. Similarly, the Coleys had also settled there at the same time. The Lockwoods left Watertown, Massachusetts for Connecticut in the late 1600s. These were families who had never known life in England and none knew their immigrant ancestors because they had lived in Connecticut for generations.

John Adams' political beliefs and determination for his support of England must have been strong. He was a young man with a growing family, likely a farmer and well settled in his community. At least five of his children - Jonathan, Hannah, John, Daniel and Sturges - were born in Connecticut by 1777.

However, life must have become untenable for John as he moved his family to English strongholds in New Jersey as the war intensified. That was the first break from his family.

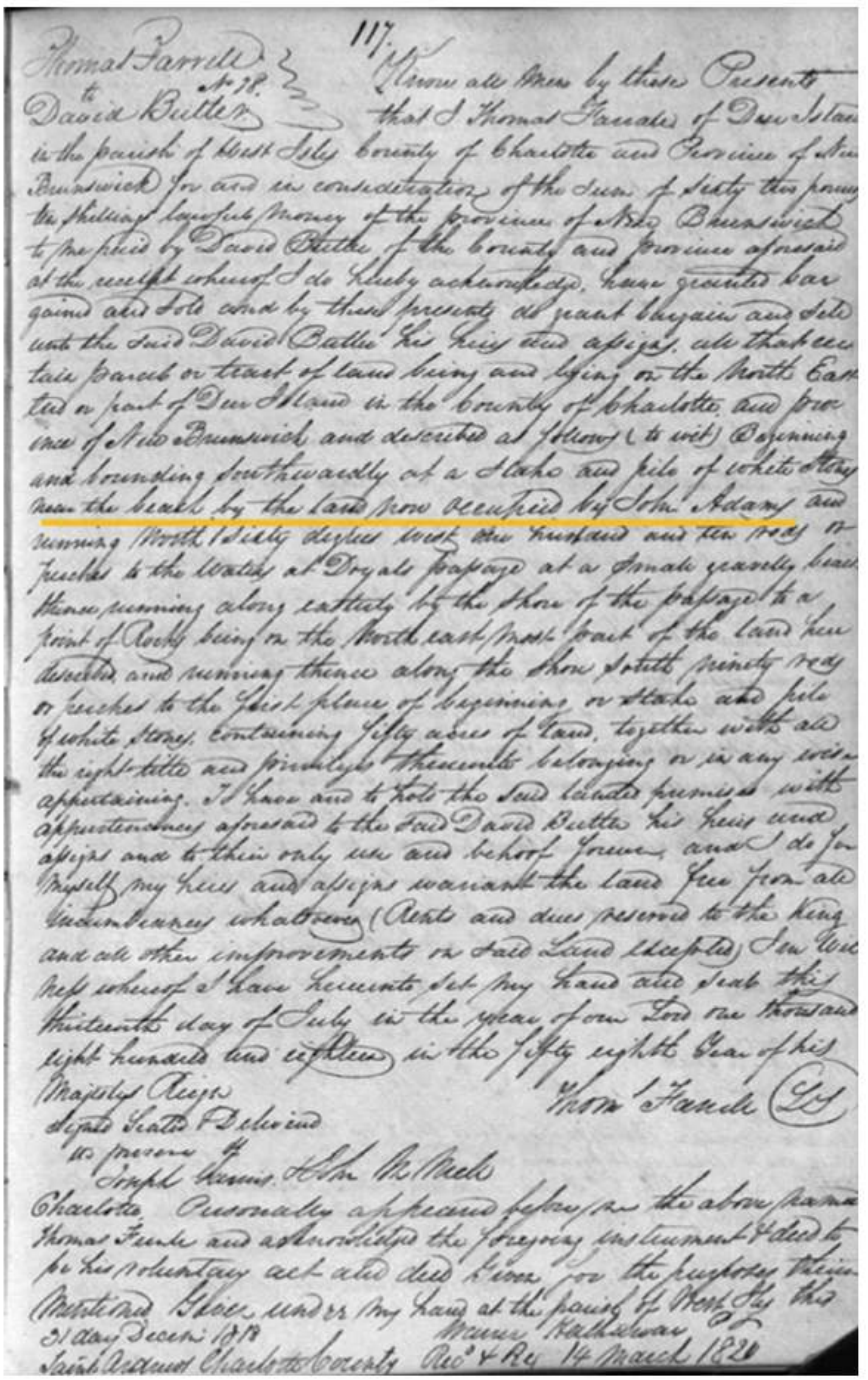
What his father thought of John's decision is unknown. The records are silent. A hint might be gleaned from David's 1796 will in which no mention is made of his son, John. Did David provide John with any money when he left Fairfield County? Or did he cut him out of his life and consider him dead? Again, the records are silent.

What is known, though, is that John Adams served with the Queens Rangers and in Captain John Vought's Company, 6th Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers, where he appears on muster rolls in November 1777 and January and March 1778.

Near the end of the war, John's oldest son, Jonathan, served in the Commissary General's Department, in charge of distributing supplies to British troops.

Therefore, we know that John Adams had actual British military service and was living in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area, not too far from his home in Connecticut, for a good portion of the war years, from 1777-1783.

At the close of the Revolutionary War, John Adams packed up his family and settled in New Brunswick, now in Canada, with his wife and at least six known children with sons Thomas born in New Brunswick in 1783 and James born there c1785.



Deed for neighbor's property suggesting John Adams was squating near the beach. From Ancestor Life Sketch: Daniel Adams (1810-1893), New Brunswick, Canada & Calais, Maine, Part 1, a post by Linda Stufflebean

So, by 1783, we have a man who grew up surrounded by generations of family and friends in Fairfield County, Connecticut who first uprooted his wife and young children to remove to New Jersey and then again to permanently settle in New Brunswick.

What became of John is uncertain. Family lore said he never agreed to accept any Canadian land. Whether that meant he was opposed to the offer in general or didn't like the land he was offered is not known. However, John Adams' name doe not appear on any of the Loyalist Memorialist petitions that survive today. His sons, Jonathan and John Jr. made petitions for land at Rusagonis Creek, near today's Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada and the extended family apparently settled near there at Maugerville.

In fact, John Adams only appears in one single Canadian record - an 1818 land deed in which the property description includes "near the beach by the land now occupied by John Adams" and was located on Adams Island in the West Isles, Charlotte, New Brunswick, Canada.

Therefore, at some point, the family left the Maugerville, Sunbury County area and became fishermen, squatting on both Adams Island and, later, Deer Island, eking out a living from the sea.

No further mention is made of John Adams and he likely died not long after as he would have been about 78 years old in 1818.

So, to answer the question of what life was life for this Loyalist family - John Adams, from a settled, comfortable lifestyle with many family and friends, became a fisherman supporting his large family in the West Isles of Canada.

As far as can be determined, he never owned land in Canada and when he died, if it wasn't by accident at sea, he was likely buried in an unmarked grave either on Adams Island or nearby Deer Island.
In short, he gave up his family, friends and whatever real and personal estate he had in Connecticut for a difficult life living off the sea.

It wasn't until decades later in the 1850s that some of his grandchildren left Canada and moved into Maine, where they saw prospects of a better life.

Article shared from https://substack.com/home/post/p-173535814

Copyright 2026 Linda Stufflebean

THE

Massachusetts Spy

Or, Thomas's Boston Journal.

Do THOU Great LIBERTY inspire our Souls—And make our Lives in THY Possession happy—Or, our Deaths glorious in THY just Defence.

VOL. IV.) THURSDAY, JULY 7, 1774. (NUMB. 179.

JOIN OR DIE

THE great demand for this paper, has often occasioned many good customers being disappointed, for which the publisher is very sorry: He will, in future, endeavour to prevent any thing of the like kind happening, so long as he may have the honour of being an hand-servant to the public.

The gloomy prospect of public affairs, at present, in this devoted capital, has occasioned some pressing Demands *upon him, which with* great reluctance *he informs his customers, he can by no means answer without their kind assistance: He is loath to trouble them with a* "dunning" *advertisement, but his affairs make it necessary: His customers in the country towns in this province, and those in the other colonies, he hopes will take* proper notice *of it, and consider there is no possibility, (especially for a* young beginner) *in carrying on business without* regular payments.

A work of this kind, it is well known is attended with great expence, and he begs leave to mention, that the MASSACHUSETTS SPY *is a third larger than any News-Paper published in this province, and contains as much News, as many Political Essays, as any in America; and is the cheapest on the globe.*

I. THOMAS.

Boston, June 9, 1774.

In the House of Representatives, June 14, 1774.

WHEREAS there will become due in this month, sundry notes given by the province-treasurer, and sufficient provision having been made for the paying off the same, and if the possessors of such notes should not bring them in to the treasurer to be paid, the province will suffer damage by such neglect:

Therefore Resolved, That the possessors of such notes, who shall not bring them to the province-treasurer, to be paid by the 1st day of July next, shall not receive any interest on the same, after that time, and the province treasurer, is hereby directed forthwith to cause this order to be published in all the Boston News-papers, three weeks successively, that every one concerned may be notified hereof.

Sent up for concurrence. T. CUSHING, speaker

In council, June 15th. Read and concurred.

JOHN COTTON, D. sec'ry.

Consented to, THO'S. GAGE.

A true copy, attest. JOHN COTTON, D. sec'ry.

*** The treasurer of the province hereby gives public notice to the delinquent constables and collectors of the province taxes, that they pay the same into the treasury by the 31st of July next.

Treasury-Office, June 18, 1774.

From the PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE.

LETTER IV.

To the Inhabitants of the British Colonies in AMERICA.

Brethren,

THE intelligence received, since the preceding letter was written, seems to render candidly every attempt to prove from *former transactions*,—any fact intention, if Ministers had permitted—that a regular plan has been invariably pursued to inflave these colonies, and that the act of

Riots and weak publications, by a small number of individuals, are sufficient reasons with Parliament to rain many thousand inhabitants of a truly respectable town, to dissolve charters, to abolish the benefits of the writ of *habeas corpus*, and extirpate American liberty—for the principle reaches all. But in *England* the press groans with publications, seditious, treasonable and even blasphemous. The *Gloucestrian* forum over the kingdom, proclaiming their refreshments. Many enormous riots have disturbed the public peace. The sovereign has been insulted in passing from his palace to the Parliament-house, on the business of the nation. Is it to be concluded from these facts, that the BODY OF THE PEOPLE is seditious and traitorous? can his Majesty believe, that he is thought by his English subjects in *general* to be such a prince, as some of them have represented him? will the two houses of Parliament acknowledge what has been spoken and written and acted against them in *England*, expressive the sentiments of the kingdom? or will they say, that the *people* of *England* have forfeited their liberty, because *some of them* have run into scoundrelsh? let a judgment be formed in *both* cases by the *same* rule. Let these conduct *chiefs* or *attack* us.

Pretences and reasons are totally different. The provocations, said to be given by our sister colony, are but the PREVENCES for the exorbitant severity exercised against her. The REASONS are these—the policy, desperable and detestable as it is, of supporting the freedom of *America* by a military force, to be supported by money taken out of our own pockets, and the supposed convenience of opportunity for attaining this end. These REASONS are evident from the minister's speech. The system is formed with art, but the art is discoverable. Indeed, I do not believe it was expected, we should have such early and small intelligence of the schemes agitated against us, as we have received. Any person, who examines the multitude of invectives published in pamphlets and news papers in *Great-Britain*, or the speeches made in either house of Parliament, will find them directed *against* the colonies in *general*. The people in that kingdom have

The July 7, 1774 edition of "Massachusetts Spy," published by Isaiah Thomas, engraved by Paul Revere. Learn more: https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/collections/commonwealth:8k71s653j

***Credit**: United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division under the digital ID cph.3a10607. Public Domain.*

1742–1813

WILLIAM ROWLAND, ARMED BOATMAN, 1742–1813

A King's Pilot in the American Revolution – Stories250

Anne blogs at Grandma's Granny's Family Album https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com

SCAN ME

What is an armed boatman? A man, with a boat, and weapons? Did he row around the coast and then all of a sudden, stand up and shoot?

Yes. He pretty much did.

My 4th great-grandfather William Rowland was a private in the Loyalist Company of Armed Boatmen in the Revolutionary War.1

Whaleboat War

Back then, everybody knew what "armed boats" were, the official name for the whaleboats used by privateers, another official name meaning a legal pirate.

A whaleboat was a narrow open rowboat, 30 to 36 feet long, with pointed bow and stern and 8 to 10 oars to be rowed by 8 to 10 men. A boat may have had a short removable mast; some had small cannons, but otherwise the armed part referred to the bayonets, swords, and muskets carried by the crew.2

Whaleboats of privateers in the Revolution, https://www.monmouthhistory.org/250/the-bold-privateering-of-adam-hyler

Rebel whaleboats had a Mate as the helmsman and eight privates as the crew, which rotated. If the Loyalist boats were similarly crewed, the size of the Armed Boatmen Company means it had about eight boats.3

New York City was the British Army's main base of operations for most of the Revolutionary War. Loyalists from all over the colonies sought refuge there. Flowing west from the city, Long Island, rural with small towns, provided the city with food and other goods.4 Long Islanders held a mix of opinions. The closer to New York City, the more prevalent was allegiance to the King, all the way to Hempstead. On the eastern end, towns that had been settled by New Englanders aligned with rebellious Connecticut. Connecticut lay across the Long Island Sound to the north. On a clear day, you can see across. What did it mean that coast-dwellers, who had easy access to boats and knowledge of the water, were able to see enemy land?

Current map, with Stamford Connecticut on the north coast of the Long Island Sound; Long Island and Manhattan, New York; Newark New Jersey across New York Harbor from Manhattan; and Lakewood and Toms River New Jersey along the Jersey Shore, Google Maps.

One thing it meant was that the famous Culper's spy ring operated by sending messages across the Sound in whaleboats. It also meant smuggling because trade between Connecticut and Long Island was mostly illegal.5 And it meant Patriots who had fled to Connecticut often wanted to risk recovering their belongings. Then, of course, it meant thieves.

Another thing it meant was that local men in whaleboats were constantly raiding the other side.

The other side of the Sound.

The other side of the war.

NORTH RIVER
NEW YORK ISLAND
EAST OR SOUND RIVER
A PLAN of the CITY and ENTRANCE of NEW YORK in NORTH AMERICA.
PART OF LONG ISLAND

A British war map, with Manhattan or New York Island, the North or Hudson River on the west, the East or Sound River as the strait joining New York Harbor with Long Island Sound, and Long Island on the south and east

On the other side of New York City was the Jersey shore. Similar other-side dynamics went on there too. The difference was that New Jersey saw more bloodshed...hand-to-hand combat...houses burnt to ashes...personal retaliation...or, homes personally spared. Because New Jersey was more internally divided. One-third Patriots, one-third Loyalists, one-third pacifist Quakers, New Jersey bred personal feuds.6

Throughout the Revolution in what was known as the Whaleboat War, raiders attacked locations on the mainland surrounding New

York City, British commercial ships, and, of course, each other. Supply deliveries were interrupted, warehouses destroyed, and goods seized. Privateers brought their prizes home, where they were legally supposed to sell them and divide the profits between their financial backers and their government.7 I don't know how closely that process was followed.

The Armed Boatmen

By 1781, the British side was losing too many whaleboat wars. Two of three battalions supposed to protect New York City's port had been sent south. Sir Henry Clinton, Commander in Chief of the British Army, lodged complaints, but the Navy didn't send enough ships to stop the raids.8 So Clinton, rather ingeniously I think, took matters into his own hands.

Armed Boat Company
Warrant to Luce

To William LUCE Esqr.

By Virtue of the Power & Authority in me vested, I do hereby Authorize & empower you to raise for his Majesty's Service, One Company of Able Bodied Men, to be employed in Whale Boats & other Armed Vessels, to consist of One Capt., four Lieuts., Eight Mates & Ninety two Private Men who will engage to serve in the above mentioned Capacity for two years, or, if required, during the Continuance of the present Rebellion in North America, to receive the same Pay as the Marines employed in the Armed Vessels in the Qr. Masr. Genls. Depart. to be Cloathed, Armed & be under the same Regulation & Discipline as his Majesty's Provincial Forces.

The Officers to be appointed by me; & it is to be made known to the Lieuts. that, upon each of them producing Twenty five Men, they will be entitled to their Pay & Commission. All Officers Civil & Military & Others his Majesty's Legal Subjects are hereby required to be Aiding & Assisting to you & all concerned in the Execution of the Above Services, for which this shall be to you & them a Sufficient Warrant & Authority.

Given under my Hand & Seal at Head Quarters New York the 2nd Day of July 1781.

H. CLINTON

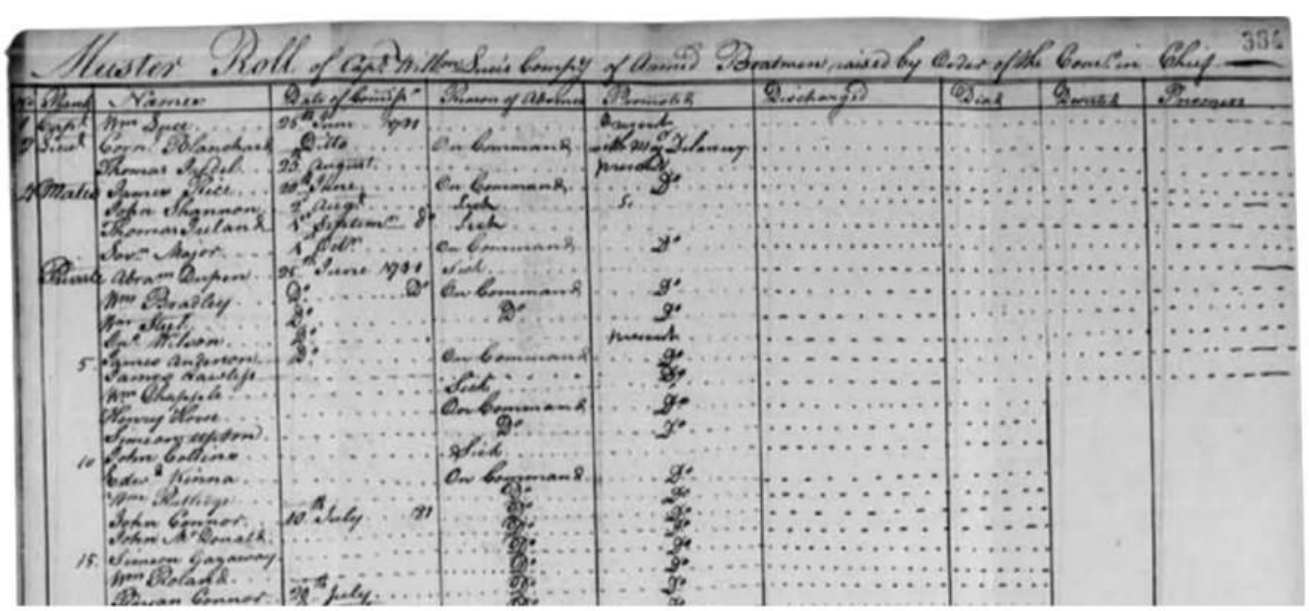
Warrant of Armed Boat Company, https://royalprovincial.com/military/rhist/abc/abcform.htm

He authorized William Luce, a New Jersey Loyalist, to raise a company of Armed Boatmen. The Boatmen were part of the Army. They were to be employed in whaleboats and other armed vessels.

They were to receive the same pay as the Marines employed in the Quartermaster's armed vessels. They were to be clothed and armed and operate under the same discipline and regulation as His Majesty's Provincial Forces. And they were to serve for two years or the continuance of the present rebellion in North America.9

Captain Luce raised 92 able-bodied privates, 8 mates, and 4 lieutenants, as instructed. Commander Dongen recruited 125 more, mainly from New Jersey, including many black men.10 (Two proclamations had promised freedom to escaped slaves and protection for all black people who worked for the British Army.)

My ancestor, William Rowland, enlisted as a private on June 25, 1781, before the official warrant was even signed on July 2. He was present on July 10, but was marked "with Major DeLancey" on July 20. Eight men, including two Mates, were marked "with Major DeLancey," so it appears that the Armed Boatmen had sent a full whaleboat.11 Major DeLancey could have been Oliver DeLancey, who commanded DeLancey's Brigade, which had a battalion of Loyalist soldiers defending Long Island in 1781.12 Or it could have meant James DeLancey, whose force of Westchester Refugees, known as Cowboys for stealing cattle, terrorized rebels in Westchester County, New York.13


Muster Roll of Capt. Willm Luce's Compy of Armed Boatmen, raised by Order of the Comdr in Chief. Wm Roland is line 16, On Command, present. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/loyalists/loyalists-ward-chipman/pages/image

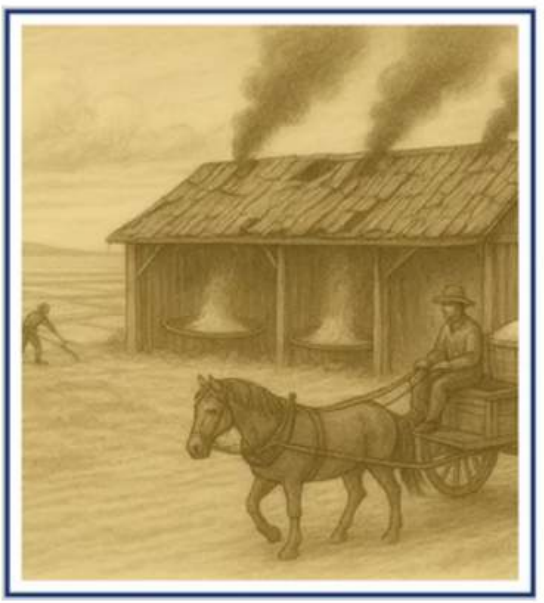
William then mustered with the Armed Boatmen from at least Christmas Day 1781 until the end of 1782, including when the Company was under the command of Nathan Hubbill. That most likely puts him in these engagements:

- Woodbridge, New Jersey, December 21, 1781
- Elizabethtown Point, New Jersey, March 10, 1782
- New Brunswick, New Jersey, January 8, 1782
- Forked River, New Jersey, June 5, 1782
- Toms River, New Jersey, March 23, 1782 14

At New Brunswick, the Armed Boatmen joined 200 to 300 troops to burn every boat on the Raritan River.15

Raid at Forked River

At Forked River, the saltworks were destroyed. Saltworks along the New Jersey shore were important targets, as they were a good source of income for the Patriots. Salt is not only necessary for life, but it was also vital to preserve meat for the winter. Before the Revolution, Americans imported salt from Britain. Starting in 1776, the British naval blockade caused a severe salt shortage. So American governments promoted domestic salt production. Many successful saltworks were located in the shallow bays along the Monmouth County shore. Pans filled with water at high tide; water was evaporated by boiling; sea salt was collected.16



A sketch of saltworks in Monmouth County, New Jersey, during the Revolution17

On June 5, 1782, an article appeared in the *New Jersey Gazette*.

> *On the morning of the 1st, one Davenport, a refugee, landed with about 40 whites and 40 blacks, at Forked River, and burnt Samuel Brown's salt-works, and plundered him; they then proceeded southward toward Barnegat, for the purpose of burning the salt works along the shore between those places. Thus, they are conciliating the affections of the Americans!18*

Davenport led a gang of homeless Loyalist refugees hiding out in the pine barrens at Refugeetown in Sandy Hook, New Jersey. Known as the Pine Robbers, they contained a large number of black Loyalists, who were escaped slaves and free blacks, mostly from the large African-American population in Monmouth County.19

The Gazette article blames Davenport while other sources credit the Armed Boatmen.20

Louis Glanzman, Toms River Block House, 2010, Oil on Canvas, Ocean Country Cultural & Heritage Commission. https://www.co.ocean.nj.us//WebContentFiles//3cb5f5a7-24d9-4d76-b0e3-373a2dbcc22b.pdf

Raid at Toms River

The Toms River raid was probably the largest and most destructive one William fought in. Toms River was a coastal village of about 15 homes, 2 taverns, a mill, a few warehouses, a boatyard, and a blockhouse. The village sympathized solidly with the rebels and mainly supported itself by raiding the British. It was perfectly set up for such raiding. As the river was too shallow, ships had always anchored and sent cargo ashore in rowboats. At the time of the raid, about 20 small craft tied up at the wharf.

Toms River knew it was high on the list of revenge targets. Expecting the Loyalists to launch retaliatory raids, Toms River erected a blockhouse for defense. The blockhouse was basically a

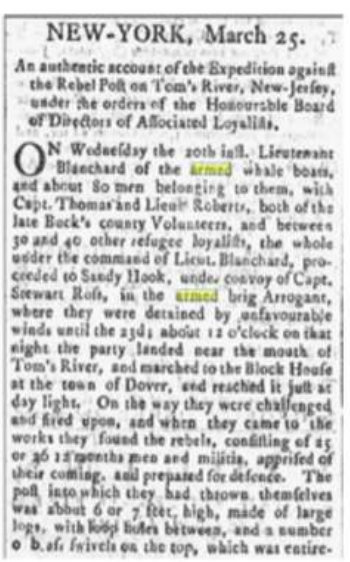
cage, constructed of heavy vertical logs six or seven feet high, with no doors, but loop holes between logs to shoot thru. Mounted on top were several brass cannons that swiveled. The only way for its 25 militiamen to get in or out was by ladder.

Around midnight on March 23, the British warship Arrogant led a force of about 120 Associated Loyalists and Armed Boatmen under Lieutenant Blanchard in whaleboats. They were spotted, but continued upriver under fire until they reached the blockhouse just before dawn. The militiamen inside had been alerted; ready on defense, they began shooting as the Loyalists approached. Boatman Lt. Blanchard called on the outnumbered militiamen to surrender, but they refused. The blockhouse was overrun. Lt. Iredell of the Boatmen was killed and about five Boatmen wounded.

The Loyalist forces burnt the blockhouse to the ground. Next they turned to the helpless town, plundering and burning every building except two houses, which they may have spared for personal reasons. Once the town was on fire and the people driven from their homes, they made their escape as smoothly as they had come. The Toms River fighters had stopped them from carrying out the rest of the raids planned for that day; instead, the Boatmen carried their wounded home.21

The *Maryland Gazette* reported:

> *The Refugees have paid Toms River a visit. They have burnt most of the houses, stripped and plundered the inhabitants of most everything. Mr. Daniel Randolph is (captured and) carried to New York. Moses Robins is badly wounded and stripped of everything. The inhabitants are in great distress.22*



NEW-YORK, March 25.

An authentic account of the Expedition againſt the Rebel Poſt on Tom's River, New-Jerſey, under the orders of the Honourable Board of Directors of Aſſociated Loyaliſts.

ON Wedneſday the 20th inſt. Lieutenant Blanchard of the armed whale boats, and about 80 men belonging to them, with Capt. Thomas and Lieut. Roberts, both of the late Bock's county Volunteers, and between 30 and 40 other refugee loyaliſts, the whole under the command of Lieut. Blanchard, proceeded to Sandy Hook, under convoy of Capt. Stewart Roſs, in the armed brig Arrogant, where they were detained by unfavourable winds until the 23d; about 12 o'clock on that night the party landed near the mouth of Tom's River, and marched to the Block Houſe at the town of Dover, and reached it juſt at day light. On the way they were challenged and fired upon, and when they came to the works they found the rebels, conſiſting of 25 or 36 12 months men and militia, appriſed of their coming, and prepared for defence. The poſt into which they had thrown themſelves was about 6 or 7 feet high, made of large logs, with loop holes between, and a number o b.aſs ſwivels on the top, which was entire-

an account published in the New York Gazette, a Loyalist newspaper23

Great Whaleboat Battle

William was probably not involved in the Great Whaleboat Battle, but I include it here because it shows the ferocity on the part of his comrades-in-arms and their foes, ordinary men who had all been peaceable subjects of the King just a decade before. William's muster rolls show him under the command of Lt. Blanchard, whereas this battle was between Lt. Johnson's men in three boats against rebel Captain Caleb Brewster. It took place on the Sound outside Stamford, Connecticut on the 7th of December 1782.

American Major Benjamin Tallmadge described the battle in a letter to General George Washington. Rebel boats planned a raid on Long Island, but were stuck in Stamford several days by a squall of wind and heavy rain. They received word that three Loyalist boats were also sheltering nearby. When the Loyalists set out for Huntington, Long Island, Brewster pursued them; one boat sped away. "After a severe Conflict," the rebels killed 6 and wounded and captured 10 men, including the entire crew of one boat. Brewster was severely wounded by a musket ball thru his body; several of his men were wounded but none killed.

Brewster wrote a detailed report during his recovery: He divided his six boats to surround the Loyalist boats, but only two of Brewster's boats caught the Armed Boatmen. When Brewster sailed by Lt. Johnson's boat, Johnson shot Brewster in the body and another man in the head, killing him. Brewster waited to fire until he was closer. The wind shifted and the men didn't have time to reload, so they boarded the Loyalist boat using their musket butts as clubs. By the end of the battle, only one Loyalist was left unhurt. Five rebels were wounded, two with balls and the rest with bayonets. The Loyalists were well outfitted with three large wall pieces, by which I think he means cannons, and a complete set of King's muskets with bayonets. One of the Mates, Hart, gave Brewster several blows with the cannon's rammer. Lt. Johnson surrendered to the rebels after two of his men were killed by a swivel gun, which I also believe is a cannon. Brewster reported that "Seven of the Enemy are buried... two more lie...badly wounded the rest am informd are prisoners." He went on to say he was "expecting to have another trial [with their boats shortly] as they infest this Coast daily."

The Armed Boatmen's next muster roll after this battle basically corroborates this account, reporting 5 men dead and 1 officer and 9 men captured.24

A Pilot

William disappeared off the Armed Boatmen's muster rolls in 1783, the last year of the Revolution.25 He did not die, desert, surrender, serve somewhere else, or go to the hospital. Where was he?

It was probably a good thing he was not still mustered with them. The Armed Boatmen was not one of the regiments recommended by Sir Guy Carleton, the British general in charge of the surrender, to receive land grants from the Crown for their service in the war.26

But William did get a land grant. He was one of only 15 men to be personally ordered a land grant by Rear Admiral Digby of the British Navy, who had been sent to manage the British withdrawal, because of his service to the King as a pilot.27

A pilot? When was William a pilot? Is that was he was doing in 1783 when he was not on the muster roll?

Maybe. I don't know, but he had to have been a pilot sometime during the war, and his service had to have been important enough to warrant a land grant, as well as come to the attention of no less a person than the Rear Admiral of the entire British Navy in North America.

In addition, a 1782 muster roll of the Armed Boatmen says that William was absent due to being on the Amphion between the 15th of September and the 24th of November.28 What was the Amphion?

The Amphion was a British warship, a fifth-rate frigate with 32 guns that had been built two years before. It had participated in traitor Benedict Arnold's attack on New London, Connecticut, when he was a British officer. It had recaptured the British sloop Bonetta that had been lost at the Battle of Yorktown.29 William wasn't present on the Amphion during those exploits, but it was certainly an active and effective warship.

I wonder if he was lent to the ship to act as its pilot.

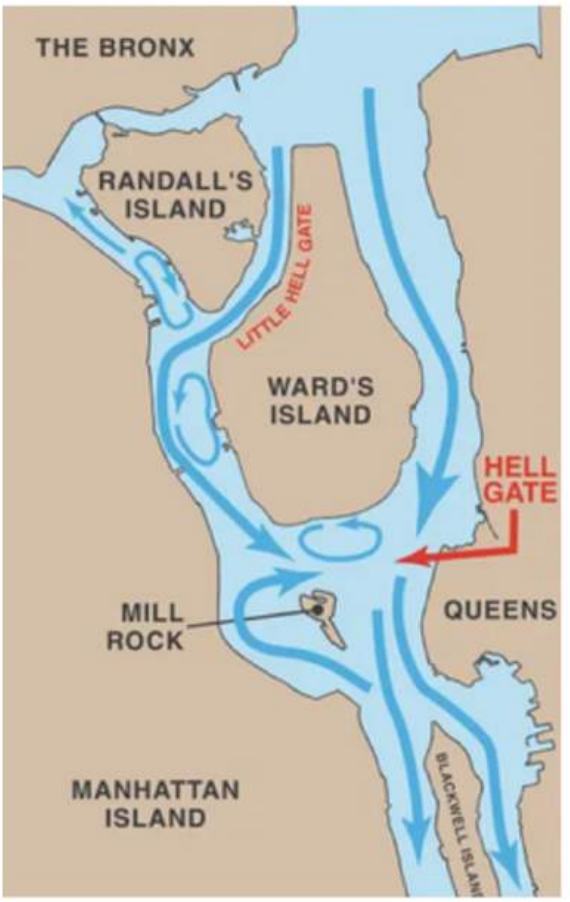
What was the job of a pilot?

Pundol, Lara, "A Maritime Pilot Boarding a Ship," https://www.redbubble.com/people/larapundol/shop#profile

Pilots took over from captains to steer ships thru tricky local waterways. Then as now, they approached the larger vessel in small craft and boarded by way of a ladder up the side. Pilots were necessary to bring ships into harbors and up rivers. They were especially important in the uncertainty of wartime, when British captains would not know which passages were safe, whether maps were accurate, or if rebels had planted booby-traps. Surely, in their nightmares, captains saw themselves in the disaster of the Gaspee, a British ship burnt to the waterline by rebels, its crew captured and captain shot, when it lay helpless, run aground in Newport Harbor in 1777.30

Being a pilot required intelligence, daring, intuition, knowledge, and above all, the confidence to assume command far above the pilot's social station. It required ordering captains around. It meant earning the respect of an entire battle-hardened crew. It meant steering a vessel worth more money than you and all your neighbors would see in a lifetime. And it required being right when making life-and-death choices.

Like Frank Sinatra sang of New York, if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere. Because New York Harbor included the aptly named Hell Gate, a narrow strait of submerged rocks hidden beneath the tides and currents of three converging waterways, just waiting to mutilate the unwary. Even tho the original name Helle Gat is Dutch for Bright Opening, the multitude of shipwrecks made the Anglicized version stick.31

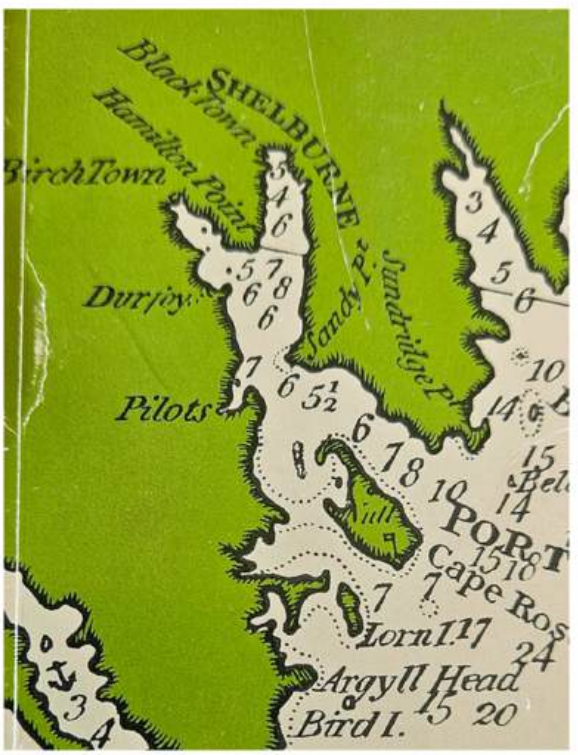


Hell Gate. This map illustrates how the currents coming from the Long Island Sound, located to the above right of Ward's Island, and those created by the Harlem River, which entered the East River to the left of Randall's Island created a perplexity of currents. "The Conquest of Hell Gate," U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. No date. https://sites.ucmerced.edu/files/kdawson4/files/enslaved_ship_pilots_in_the_age_of_revolutions_2.pdf National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (n.d.). Hell Gate tidal currents map [Map]. Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Pilots were so respected, even those who were slaves were deferred to by white sea captains as well as crew.32 Many pilots were black, which may go hand-in-hand with the integrated nature of the Armed Boatmen.

William Rowland was a pilot during and after the Revolution, so it makes sense that he could have also been a pilot before it started. Piloting was on-again-off-again work, not a permanent job. A pilot's permanent job needed to be on the water, where he could gain the intricate yet ever-changing knowledge he would steer ships by. A pilot was most likely a fisherman, ferryman, or oarsman, operating a boat low to the water where every wave was felt and every rock spotted.33

That means William lived somewhere in the vicinity of New York Harbor,34 close enough to be familiar with the variations of the winds, tides, and water tables. He knew when the neap tide of a waxing crescent would hold enough water to allow the draft of a ship carrying however much cargo to make it past reefs and sandbars to port. When was it safe to make a run for it? When was it necessary to ride anchor? And which tack to take if the enemy was chasing you? Or would it be feasible to attack a foe?



Map indicating Pilot Town on Shelburne Harbor, portion of "A New Chart of the Coast of Nova Scotia..." by Capt. Holland, 1798, Provincial Map Collection, Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Robertson, Marion, King's Bounty, Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, 1983, cover

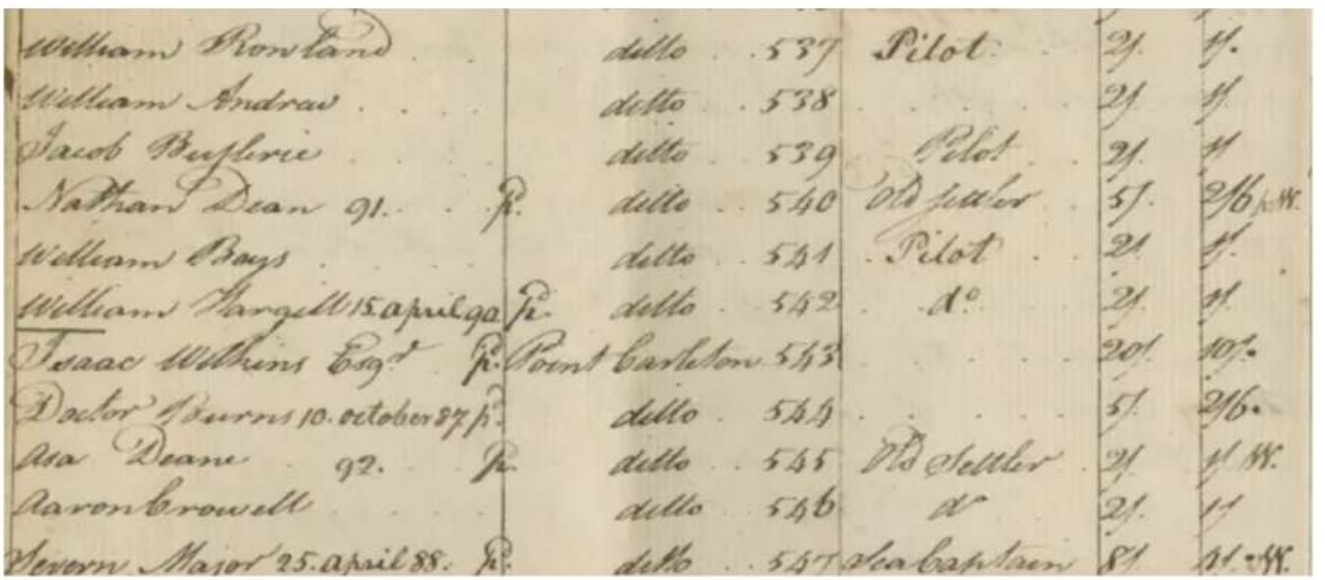
Land Grants after the War

Britain rewarded Americans who had remained loyal to the Crown and thereby lost their property by giving them land grants in British colonies. William and the other fourteen pilots whom the admiral had deemed deserving of land grants had arrived in Shelburne, Nova Scotia by September 1783, along with tens of thousands of other refugees. Admiral Digby had requested the pilots be allotted land there,35 probably because Shelburne has the third best harbor in the world.36 On account of that harbor, the British intended for Shelburne to become a great city. Altho the admiral allowed for the pilots to get land wherever they wished, surely he expected them to be key players in the port's development.

On October 2, land for the pilots was surveyed at Gunning Cove on the west side of the harbor. William and five others claimed 50-acre

farm lots behind a village laid out with the name Pilot Town. The village was made up of 24 lots along the shore, plus a lot each for church, school, and public use. Even a 60-foot-wide road was included. The pilots received half of their wartime pay,37 which I think lasted between one and three years. I now own a house near William's land.

First line, William Rowland, at Round Bay, pilot, paid 2 pounds county tax, 1 shilling poor tax



William Rowland		ditto	537	Pilot	2/.	1/.
William Andrew		ditto	538		2/.	1/.
Jacob Buflerie		ditto	539	Pilot	2/.	1/.
Nathan Dean 91.	p.	ditto	540	Old settler	5/.	2/6 p.W.
William Boys		ditto	541	Pilot	2/.	1/.
William Hargell 15 april 90	p.	ditto	542	d°	2/.	1/.
Isaac Wilkins Esqr	p.	Point Carleton	543		20/.	10/.
Doctor Burns 10. october 87	p.	ditto	544		5/.	2/6.
Asa Deane 92.	p.	ditto	545	Old Settler	2/.	1/. W.
Aaron Crowell		ditto	546	d°	2/.	1/.
Severn Major 25. april 88.	p.	ditto	547	Sea Captain	8/.	4/. W.

Last line, Severn Major, paid on 25 April 1788, at Point Carleton, sea captain, paid 8 pounds county tax, 4 shillings poor tax W. Severn Major was a lieutenant in William's Company of Armed Boatmen38

A 1787 visitor wrote an opinion of the pilots: "No people among the Loyalists have exerted themselves more successfully than they in rendering their present situation comfortable."39

Almost ten years after the war's end, William earned his living as a pilot and paid one pound county taxes and 6 shillings poor tax, the same as his pilot neighbors, which was on the low end for the area. As the years went on, he and all his pilot neighbors but one began to be labeled as farmers or laborers. The one man who remained a pilot earned a half-pay annuity of 40 pounds.40 Shelburne never lived up to its promise as a great seaport; its population dwindled and there was no need for pilots to guide fleets that never came.

The shore near Gunning Cove today, photo by author

Epilogue

William died at home in August 1813 at the age of 71. I only know of four children born to him and his wife Rachel, all daughters: Ann, Felicia, Mary, and Eleanor (Nelly), all born in Gunning Cove.41 If they had children before coming to Nova Scotia, I have not found them in records. Without sons, the family carried Rowland into the future as a middle name, giving it to both male and female descendants, until it finally vanished.

Because it's hiding behind first and last names in the tree leaves, I didn't find Rowland to explore until later. It seemed less important somehow. But I ended up discovering that William's wartime service is the best documented of all my Loyalist ancestors. So far he is the bravest and most skilled.

He is long overdue for his place in the sun.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Loyalists in the Maritimes - Ward Chipman Muster Master's Office, 1777-1785. Muster roll Year: 1781 Volume: 27 Page(s): 370 Record Title: Muster Roll of Captain Nathan Hubbill's Company of armed boatmen. Microfilm Reel Number: C-9818 Reference: MG 23 D1, Series 1 Item Number: 18188, Government of Canada Library and Archives of Canada*

2. *Kuhl, Jackson, Nov 1 2023, The Whaleboat Men of Long Island Sound, Journal of the American Revolution, https://allthingsliberty.com/2013/11/whale-boat-men-long-island-sound/, accessed 28 May 2026.*

3. *MacCallum, Kenneth, THE ARMED BOAT COMPANY AND THE GREAT WHALEBOAT BATTLE OF DECEMBER 7, 1782, pdf, https://uelac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/*

4. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Boat_Company*

5. *https://allthingsliberty.com/2013/11/whale-boat-men-long-island-sound/*

6. *The most famous New Jersey feud was that of Benjamin Franklin, an author of the Declaration of Independence, who supposedly encouraged his fellow congressmen to sign it by saying, "We must all hang together, or assuredly we will hang separately." But Ben and his son William did not hang together. William Franklin had been the royal governor of New Jersey. Now displaced, he actively fought what his father so actively supported. https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/william-franklin*

7. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Boat_Company*

8. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Boat_Company*

9. *https://royalprovincial.com/military/rhist/abc/abcform.htm*

10. *A. MacCallum*
B. Armed Boat Company, Wikipedia

11. *Muster Roll*

12. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_Lancey%27s_Brigade*

13. *See my post on Jeremiah Rushton, Revolutionary War Cowboy, https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/revolutionary-war-cowboy*

14. *A. MacCallum*
B. Armed Boat Company, Wikipedia

15. *MacCallum*

16. *https://www.monmouthhistory.org/250/salt-works-begin.*

17. *https://www.monmouthhistory.org/250/salt-works-begin.*

18. *https://www.monmouthhistory.org/250/davenports-pine-robbers-routed-at-forked-river*

19. *https://www.monmouthhistory.org/250/davenports-pine-robbers-routed-at-forked-river*

20. *I don't know if they worked together or what their connection was.*

21. *https://www.monmouthhistory.org/250/associated-loyalists-raze-toms-river*

22. *https://www.monmouthhistory.org/250/associated-loyalists-raze-toms-river*

23. *https://www.monmouthhistory.org/250/associated-loyalists-raze-toms-river*

24. *https://uelac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Kenneth-MacCallum-Great-Whaleboat-Battle-1782.pdf*

25. *Muster Roll*

26. *MacCallum https://uelac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Kenneth-MacCallum-Great-Whaleboat-Battle-1782.pdf*

27. *Robertson, Marion, King's Bounty, Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, 1983, pp. 72-73.*

28. *Muster Roll*

29. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Amphion_(1780)*

30. *See my post on Joseph Durfee, https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/captain-joseph-durfee-1725-1801*

31. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hell_Gate*

32. *https://sites.ucmerced.edu/files/kdawson4/files/enslaved_ship_pilots_in_the_age_of_revolutions_2.pdf*

33. *https://sites.ucmerced.edu/files/kdawson4/files/enslaved_ship_pilots_in_the_age_of_revolutions_2.pdf*

34. *Many trees have William and Rachel Rowland originating in Delaware. This is erroneous, as that couple goes on to live in Delaware after the Revolution. Furthermore, a Delaware native would not have detailed knowledge of New York waterways.*

35. *Robertson*

36. *https://shelburnens.ca/about-port.html*

37. *Robertson*

38. *Poll Tax Records 1791-1795, Nova Scotia Archives, archives.novascotia.ca*

39. *Robertson*

40. *Poll Tax Records*

41. *Anglican Church Records of Shelburne County, Public Archives of Nova Scotia*

OTHER SOURCES CONSULTED

- *https://www.monmouthhistory.org/250/the-bold-privateering-of-adam-hyler*
- *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whaleboat_War*
- *https://www.singlesundersail.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Whaleboat-Presentation-2-25-2021.pdf*
- *https://patch.com/new-jersey/tomsriver/the-battle-of-toms-river*
- *https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=139167*
- *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Boat_Company*
- *http://admiraldigbymuseum.ca/?page_id=46*
- *https://www.monmouthhistory.org/250/davenports-pine-robbers-routed-at-forked-river*
- *https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/salt-making/*

Article shared from https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/william-rowland-armed-boatman-1742

Copyright 2026 Anne Wendel

A 1774 illustration from The London Magazine depicts Prime Minister Lord North, author of the Boston Port Act, pouring tea from a teapot labelled "Intolerable Acts" down the throat of America. *Her arms are restrained by Lord Chief Justice Mansfield with a tattered "Boston Petition" trampled on the ground beside her. Lord Sandwich pins down her feet and peers up her robes; behind them, Mother Britannia turns away and weeps while personifications of France and Spain look on with smug expressions. Learn more: https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/97514782/*

***Credit**: The New York Public Library's Digital Library under the digital ID 56dd85d0-c606-012f-ecd0-58d385a7bc34: digitalgallery.nypl.org → digitalcollections.nypl.org. Public Domain.*

JANE CHAPMAN

Jane has been researching family history since the early 1990's and incorporating DNA evidence since 2013. In 2024 she started a one-place study. Her Substack publications mainly draw on material from her Websites on the https://weare.xyz platform. She blogs from https://bjnlsgenealogy.substack.com and https://kyeburndiggingsops.substack.com.

SCAN ME

RECORDED TALK

SCAN ME

1744–1817

RICHARD LANG

Part 1 of a nine-part series that follows Richard Lang (1744-1817) as he transitions from Loyalist soldier during the American Revolutionary War to refugee in East Florida to Spanish Citizen who turns rebel and eventually to American Citizen in Georgia. Along the way there is mention of Richard's family and other related matters.

Much of what I know about Richard Lang and his family comes from secondary sources which is not ideal. Both information and evidence are incomplete in places.

This post is the first in a series of posts about Richard Lang, his family and other related matters.

Overview

Richard had an eventful life. Too much to tell you about in just one post. I plan to share what I know about him and his family across several posts.

This first post is predominantly about Richard's family background and childhood setting. However, first I will tell you about what prompted my interest in Richard in the first place.

Later posts in this series follow Richard as he transitions from Loyalist soldier during the American Revolutionary War to refugee in East Florida to Spanish Citizen who turns rebel and eventually to American Citizen in Georgia. Along the way there will also be mention of Richard's family and other related matters.

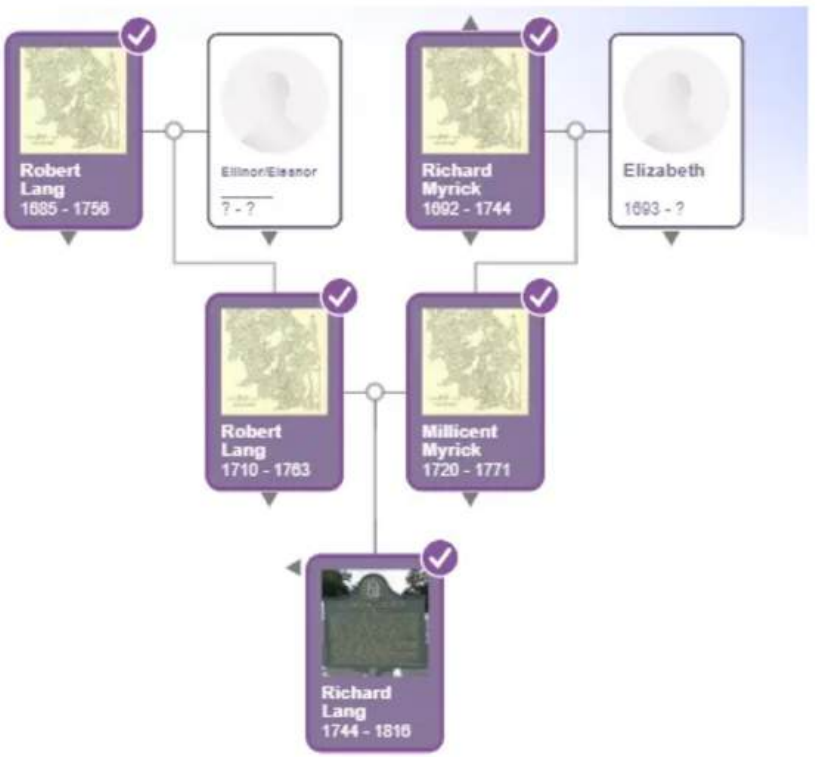
I first became interested in Richard when he kept popping up as my 4th great grandfather on people's family trees, including the trees of my DNA matches. Lots of trees show Richard as the father of my 3rd great grandfather, William Lang. However, nowhere have I found documentary evidence sufficient to confirm that. If you know of any, please let me know.

DNA🧬 suggests that I am related to Richard somehow and, when considered alongside the scant documentary evidence found so far, he is just as likely to be my 4th great grand-uncle (5th great uncle) as my 4th great grandfather. I am definitely related to him somehow but DNA analysis is inconclusive. More about that in a later post.

Regardless of whether, or how, I am related to Richard, I have always felt somewhat drawn to him. He features in a number of historical and/or academic writings. Some writers are disparaging of him, others see him as a product of the circumstances within which he found himself and are kinder to him.

Richard's Family Background

Richard was the son of Robert and Millicent (Myrick) Lang, both of whom appear to have been born in British America. Things are a bit murky as far as documentation goes but it appears that it was Richard's grandfather, also Robert, that was the Lang immigrant to America, possibly from England. The Myrick (Merrick) line appears to go back to Wales several generations before Millicent was born.



Tree created within my family history website on the weare.xyz platform

From the mid-1730's, Richard's father, Robert Lang, and his grandfather, also Robert Lang, were Cherokee and Chickasaw traders in the Congarees.

The Congarees was a major destination for Indian traders from the Virginia/North Carolina border in the 1730's-40's. People, with documented residences, who came there from the North Carolina/Virginia border in the 1730's-40's included Richard's father, Robert Lang, and paternal grandfather, Robert Lang, his maternal grandfather Richard Myrick, and his mother's brother, James Myrick1.

Image created by Chat.GPT

On 5 June 1742, two years before Richard was born, both his father, Robert, and paternal grandfather, Robert received a Royal Grant of 150 acres from King George III on the Santee River in Saxe Gotha Township in the Upper Congaree Valley within the British Colony of South Carolina2. The land received by the younger Robert (Richard's father) was later, on 11 May 1744, sold by him and his wife, Millicent, and conveyed to Thomas Brown3.

At the time of Richard's birth in 17444, his family was living near the Santee River at Saxe Gotha Township.

Saxe Gotha Township

Saxe Gotha Township was on the south side of the Congaree river. The Trading Post at the Township was the frontier centre for trade with the Catawbas to the north and the Cherokees to the west5.

The township was initially called Congaree Township. It was amongst the first of the townships created under the 1730 Township Act; an Act passed by the, then, British Colonial Government. The Act authorised nine townships of 20,000 acres each.

> *'In 1733 the governor and council ordered a township marked off at the Congarees. With its reserve it extended from Sandy Run on the Congaree beyond Twelve Mile Creek on the Saluda, but the strip of desirable land was little more than a mile wide at any point. The town, eventually known as Saxe Gotha, was laid out just above the old garrison site with its Front Street paralleling the river bank for nearly a mile, and a reservation for a fort at its northern end. The ground was level and fertile and the location convenient'*[6]

Following the passing of the 1730 Township Act ...

> *'... agents were sent to Europe to recruit families as settlers. The families were offered inducements such as free transportation to South Carolina, free provisions for one year, and free land'*[7]

The name was changed from Congaree Township to Saxe Gotha Township in 1735 to honour the spouse of a member of the British Royal Family, who was born in the area of Germany known as Saxe Gotha. It was in this same year that the first group of German settlers arrived[8]

Today the area that was Saxe Gotha Township comprises the south-eastern third of what is present-day Lexington County, South Carolina. The current town of Congaree in Lexington County, South Carolina is roughly where the centre of Saxe Gotha Township was[9].

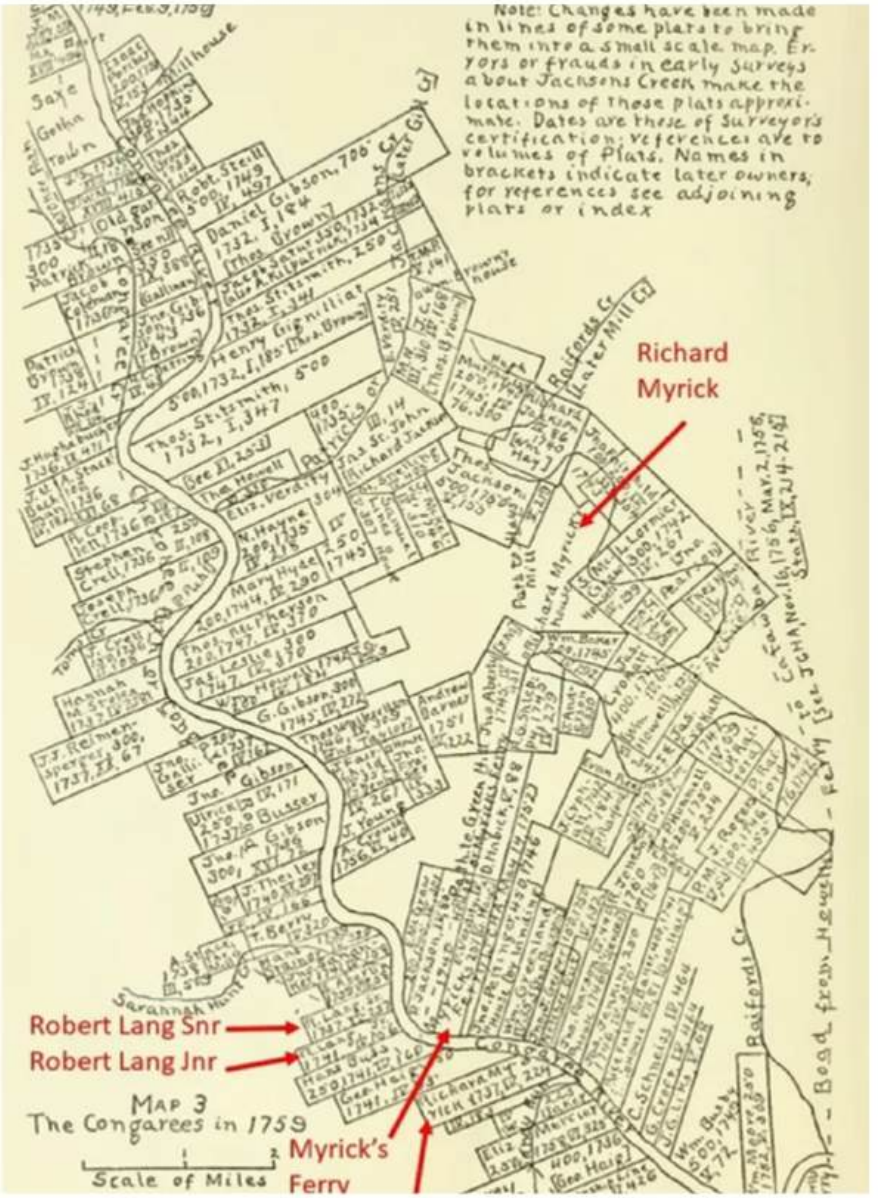
The map below has been modified by me to show where the two Robert Langs had land. It also highlights the land belonging to Richard's maternal grandfather, Richard Myrick. On the bottom left of the map, the references to the two Roberts and to Richard Myrick are:

> *R. Lang, Sr. 1737, IV, 257*
> *R. Lang, Jr. 1741, IV, 156*
> *Richard Myrick, 1737, IV, 224*

and towards the right side of the map, the reference to Richard Myrick is:

> *Richard Myrick's house*

There is also reference to Myrick's Ferry which, presumably, ferried people and goods across the Congaree River.



From: Robert Lee Meriwether (1940) The Expansion of the South 1729 – 1765. Southern Publishers Inc. via Internet Archive [Website] - page 52 - Accessed 10 December 2019 (modified)

Notwithstanding the reference to 1759 on the map, it appears that the Lang family had moved away from Saxe Gotha by 1759? They may, of course, have stilled owned land there?

On to the Saluda Valley

Within a few years of Richard's birth, the family had moved to the Saluda Valley, now Greenville County, South Carolina.

In April 1748, Richard's father, Robert, was among those living in the Saluda enlisted as Rangers by Captain James Francis. Robert Lang held a warrant as a Ranger in the Saluda Valley from 1749 to 1755.

The need to enlist Rangers came about because of the capture of Captain George Haig, the murder of a trader in the Cherokees, and other threats of an Indian outbreak10. George Haig, deputy surveyor of Carolina, fur trader, magistrate, and land speculator, was abducted from the Store and Trading Post of Thomas Brown at Fort Congaree and held for nearly a year before he was killed11.

On 28 March 1753, Richard's father purchased 100 acres of land near Crims Creek [Plat 5:498]12 (now Newberry County, South Carolina) where the family then settled. Crims Creek is a branch of the Broad River in the Saluda Valley.

In 1757, when Richard would have been about thirteen years old, his father, Robert, asked the Commons House to pay him twenty pounds as compensation for the plundering of cattle and goods and the burning of his house by Cherokees13.

Into Adulthood

Richard continued to live in South Carolina into adulthood.

The 1778-1779 Jury List14 for the Newberry District of South Carolina includes Richard Lang and his brothers William, Robert, David and James living at Little River between the Broad and Saluda.

Richard would, therefore, have been living in South Carolina when the Revolutionary War broke out in 1775. More about that in Part #2.

> *This post draws information from my family history website on the weare.xyz platform.*

FOOTNOTES

1. *Meriwhether, Robert Lee (1940) The Expansion of the South 1729 – 1765. Southern Publishers Inc. via Internet Archive [Website]. Accessed 10 December 2019.*

2. *Royal Grants, Vol.42 p.123 Cited by Steven W. Due [Records compiled by] August 8th, 2006 Original Charles Town Immigrant, Robert Dews of Barbados, And Associated Families. Accessed 20 Jan 2020.*

3. *Land Memorials, Vol. 7, page 63 Cited by Steven W. Due [Records compiled by] August 8th, 2006 Original Charles Town Immigrant, Robert Dews of Barbados, And Associated Families. Accessed 20 Jan 2020*

4. *In his testimony on 21 January 1794 while being held prisoner at the Castillo de Marcos, St Augustine, Spanish East Florida, he confirmed he was fifty years old - Extract from: Bennett, Charles E. (1981) Florida's "French" Revolution 1793-1795. Gainesville: University of Florida Press (Chapter 6, p.72) found in document '1Richard Lang Notes' via Ancestry.com (shared by Ralan64 on 19 May 2013). Accessed 24 May 2022.*

5. *Meriwhether, Robert Lee Meriwether (1940) The Expansion of the South 1729 – 1765. Southern Publishers Inc. via Internet Archive [Website]. Accessed 10 December 2019.*

6. *Robert Lee Meriwether (1940) - See Note 5.*

7. *A History of Saxe-Gotha Township, South Carolina via Carolana.com [Website].*

8. *A History of Saxe-Gotha Township, South Carolina - See Note 7*

9. *A History of Saxe-Gotha Township, South Carolina - See Note 7.*

10. *Meriwhether, Robert Lee Meriwether (1940) The Expansion of the South 1729 – 1765 (p.119) Southern Publishers Inc. via Internet Archive [Website]. Accessed 10 December 2019.*

11. *Due, Steven W. (last modified 1 Oct 2006) George Haig (Hague) Deputy Surveyor of Carolina, Fur Trader, Magistrate, & Land Speculator - Due says that George Haig was sold to the Nottoway Indians after being captured and held for a year. According to one story, George became so weak during a forced march that he demanded that the Indians kill him because he could walk no further. This evoked such great respect that the Nottaway Indians killed him quickly as a brave and noble man. Accessed 23 May 2022.*

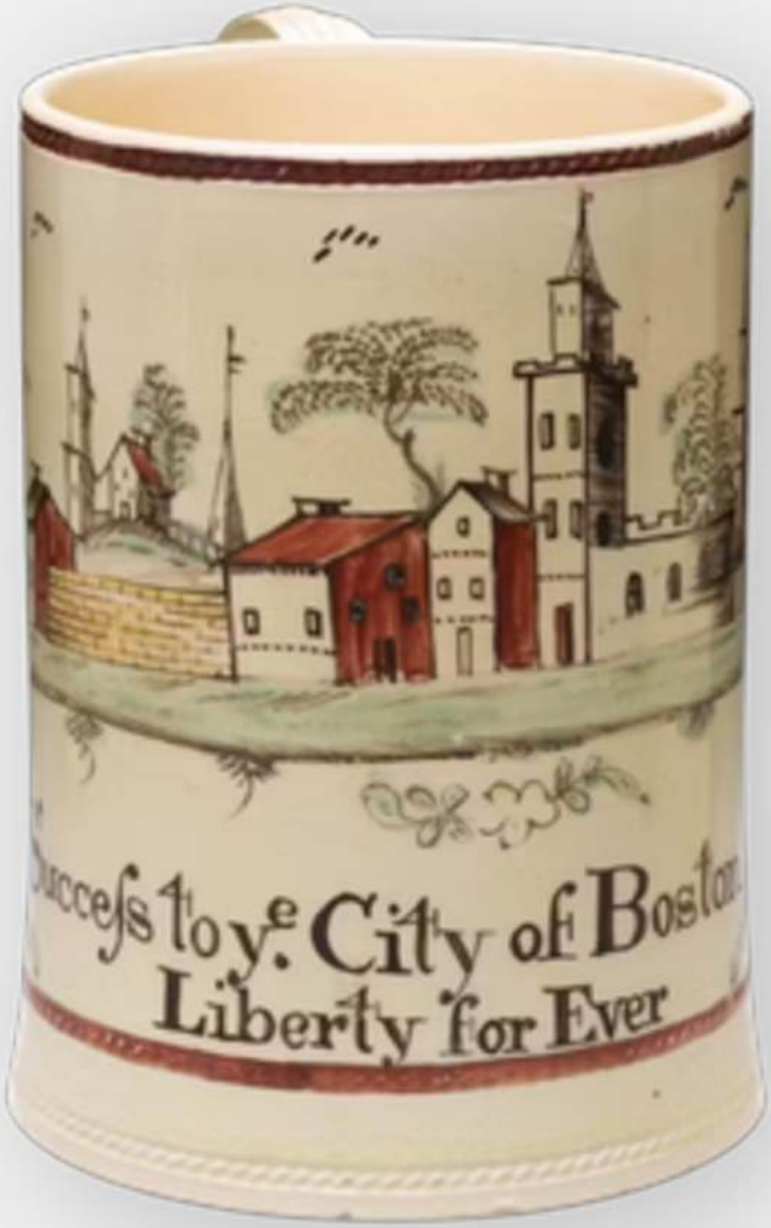
12. *Hicks, Theresa M. Crims Creek, Newberry County, South Carolina - Land Owners and Settlers on Crims Creek [Website] Accessed 11 Nov 2020 -*

13. *Meriwhether, Robert Lee (1940) The Expansion of the South 1729 – 1765. Southern Publishers Inc. via Internet Archive [Website]. Accessed 10 Dec 2019 (p.177)*

14. *Accessed 13 May 2025.*

Article shared from https://bjnlsgenealogy.substack.com/p/richard-lang-1744-1816-1-overview

Copyright 2026 Jane Chapman



*Inscribed **"Success to ye city of Boston, Liberty For Ever"** a mug, such as for beer, celebrates the City of Boston as the home of liberty in the colonies. May have been released to celebrate defiance of the Coercive Acts of 1774*

***Credit**: Produced in Staffordshire, England 1774-1776, Earthenware (creamware) in the collection of the Museum of the American Revolution 2012.00.000*

ANNE YOUNG

Sharing my family history. I am Australian with forebears from the United Kingdom and Europe. Anne blogs from https://anneyoungau.wordpress.com and https://anneyoungau.substack.com

SCAN ME

1744–1803

A LOYALIST'S REWARD

One of my Mainwaring cousins fought with the British in the American Revolutionary War

"A plan of the island of St. John with the divisions of the counties parishes & the lots as granted by government likewise the soundings round the coast and harbours. Surveyed by Capt. Holland. 1775."

On 4 July 2026 it will be 250 years since the first Independence Day. For that anniversary I am gathering stories of people in my family who fought in the American Revolutionary War.

Edward Mainwaring (1744-1803), my first cousin seven times removed, was born in 1744 in Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire, England. He was the oldest of three sons of an attorney at law, Benjamin Mainwaring (1719–1782). Benjamin, was the youngest son of Edward Mainwaring (1681-1738), the 6th Edward Mainwaring of Whitmore, and his wife Jemima Mainwaring nee Pye (~1688-1721).

The family history Mainwarings of Whitmore records that Edward

> *served as an officer during the first American war and obtained a considerable grant of land as an acknowledgement for his services in raising a company of loyalists at his own expense.*

Edward Mainwaring was a captain in the first battalion of Rogers' King's Rangers. I have not been able to discover when he joined or where he served.

An Edward Mainwaring of the 66th Regiment of Foot was promoted from Lieutenant to Captain-Lieutenant in 1772. It appears that he left the regiment by January 1775. At that time the 66th was based in the United Kingdom. In 1775 it was posted to Ireland. These Edward Mainwarings are probably the same man.

Rogers' Rangers was a company of soldiers from the Province of New Hampshire raised by Major Robert Rogers (1731-1795) and attached to the British Army during the French and Indian War (1754-1763). The unit, adopted into the New England Colonies army as an independent ranger company, was disbanded in 1761. In 1776 it was revived as a Loyalist force during the American Revolutionary War.

Soon after the war commenced Robert Rogers offered his services to General George Washington. Rogers had just returned from a long stay in England. Washington, fearing that he might be a spy, turned him down. Infuriated by the rejection, Rogers offered his services to the British side. In 1776 he formed the Queen's Rangers and in 1779 the King's Rangers. The Rangers specialized in close combat, irregular warfare, raiding, reconnaissance, and tracking.

During the Revolution, more than 19,000 Loyalists had served on the British side. After the Revolutionary War the government of King George III settled Loyalists in British colonies in the Caribbean and what is now known as Canada. Loyalists were granted land in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island (then called St. John's Island), and the Canadas (Quebec and Ontario)

Many Loyalists settled in Canada in 1783 and 1784, 30,000 of them in the territory that became the Maritime provinces.

In 1782 Captain Samuel Hayden and Captain Edward Mainwaring of the King's Rangers began promoting the Island of St John in newspaper advertisements. Hayden and Mainwaring, said to be New Jersey men, were stationed there.

James Rivington's Royal Gazette 12 March 1783

To those loyal Refugees, who either have already left, or who hereafter may leave their respective Countries in search of other Habitations.

We the subscribers, (Your Countrymen and fellow sufferers) hearing that several Families have already arrived in Nova Scotia from New York, and that many others intend coming to some of these northern Colonies next Spring.
Think it our Duty to point out this Island to you, as the most eligible Country for you to repair to; of any we know between this and New Jersey.
The Soil is good, it is well wooded, and free from Rocks.
The Climate so good that Fevers and Agues are unknown.
Water every where excellent.
The Harbours Spacious, numerous, and safe.
The Rivers, Bays, Lakes, and Coasts abounding with a great variety of Shell, and almost all other kinds of Fish, and good of their kinds.The Government is mild. But very few Taxes. These very light, and raised solely for the benefit of the Island.
There is room for tens of Thousands, and Lands in the finest situations.
On Harbours Navigable Rivers, and Bays; To be had exceedingly reasonable.
Cattle are plenty; witness the droves which have been this year taken to Halifax Market.
Before we came here, we were told, as perhaps you may be; the worst things possible of the Country, such as, that the People were Starving; we should get nothing to eat and should ourselves be eaten up by Insects, and much more equally groundless, for we have found the reverse to be true;
therefore, do not attend to such reports, but come and see, and depend on the evidence of your own Sences.
You will not imagine us to be interested in the advice we have given you, or in the Charactor of the place, as we may be ordered away tomorrow.
Be assured of the Contrary. What we have said is intended purely for your good, and if you attend to it we shall hereafter receive your thanks.
In the mean time believe us sincerely your Friends &c.

S HAYDEN Captain Commanding King Rangers
Edward MAINWARING Capt. Kings Rangers
Island Saint John
Gulph of St. Lawrence
30th November 1782.

[Docketed- An Address to the American Loyalists From the Officers of the King's Rangers stationed on the Island of Saint John 30th Novr. 1782 N.B.- The subscribers are New Jersey men.]

Poulson's American Daily Advertiser (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) 4 Mar 1783, and the Bath Weekly Chronicle and Herald (Bath, Avon, England) of 10 July 1783, and The Edinburgh Advertiser (Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland) 11 July 1783 carried similar advertisements.

In 1784 a muster roll records Captain Edward Mainwaring received a land grant of 700 acres on the Island of St John. Mainwaring's grant was in East Point, Lot 47 (the most north-easterly point of the island). The muster records one man, one woman, and three servants in his household.

About 1787 Edward Mainwaring, then 41, married Elizabeth Judith Reeves, 18, born in London. I do not know where they met nor where they were married. Their first child was born on the Island of St John in 1788. Six more children were born in England from 1790.

Edward Mainwaring transferred his landholding to a fellow Ranger, Peter Rose (1763-1812).

The Red Bank Pioneer cemetery occupies land once owned by Peter Rose. A history of the cemetery describes the land transfer from Edward Mainwaring to Rose:

> *Captain Edward Mainwaring was one of the commanding officers of the First Battalion of the King's Rangers, a British provincial military unit raised by Colonel Robert Rogers in Nova Scotia in 1777.*
> *Peter Rose joined the Rangers as the servant of Captain Edward Mainwaring.*
> *In the Spring of 1782, the First Battalion was stationed in St. John's Island (Prince Edward Island). The Battalion was disbanded in the autumn of 1783, but in November 1782, members of the King's Rangers had been encouraged to settle in St. John's Island (PEI).*
> ...
> *Peter Rose decided to stay in St. John's Island and is listed on the Muster Roll of June 12, 1784 as receiving one hundred acres in Lot 47. Captain Mainwaring, being an officer, received seven hundred acres, also in Lot 47 where North Lake is located.*
> *Mainwaring and Rose together with Martha Potts, Mainwaring's housekeeper, arrived at Surveyor's Inlet to claim their land. Some time after establishing themselves, Mainwaring decided to return to England. He proposed that if Peter married Martha Potts, he would also receive title to all of Mainwaring's land. Rose agreed and in 1796 received all of the land in North Lake.*

In 1803 Captain Edward Mainwaring, aged 59, died in London and was buried on 16 April 1803 in St Martin-In-The-Fields.

The paucity of relevant records makes it difficult to describe Edward Mainwaring's career in detail. I do not know when he came to the American Colonies nor what his motivation was for adopting a Loyalist position in the American Revolutionary War.

RELATED

- *George III: my part in his downfall*
- *The American Revolution: my Dana connection*
- *The Lexington Alarm*
- *Q is for Quebec*
- *Wilson, Bruce G.. "Loyalists in Canada". The Canadian Encyclopedia, 12 August 2021, Historica Canada. thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/loyalists. Accessed 24 August 2025.*
- *Wikitree: Edward Mainwaring (1744-1803)*

Article shared from anneyoungau.substack.com/p/a-loyalists-rewards

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Anne Young

1744–1778

THE ORIGINAL GRANTEES OF CAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Deborah blogs from https://YourFamilyQuest.com and her Substack publication of the same name. She also edits the Tips blog for https://MissionGenealogy.org.

SCAN ME

Deborah includes a voiceover for this post. To listen, please visit https://yourfamilyquest.substack.com/p/the-original-grantees-of-campton-204

SCAN ME

Peter Spencer and Aaron Cleveland did not develop the land in Campton. Asa Spencer moved to Campton around 1769

> *The timing of this story worked out well since Monday is Memorial Day. While we look forward to getting together with family, firing up the grill, and having a good time, the day is intended to remember those who gave their lives while serving in the U.S. military. As a country, I think we've forgotten that, since few of us have close family members who died in the service. I know veterans, but I don't know anyone who lost a family member in the Vietnam War, the Korean War, the Gulf War, the Iraq War, or the war in Afghanistan.*

On to the story....

Peter Spencer, one of the Original Grantees of Campton, never developed the land. He sold his rights to one hundred acres in the first and second divisions to his cousin, Joseph Spencer; he sold his right to the intervale lot to Israel Brainard; and he sold his right to one hundred acres in the fourth division to John Southmayd.1

Peter's son, Asa, was living in Campton before February 1769. The twenty-five-year-old most likely went ahead of his family to clear part of the land and build a house before his wife, Deborah Patterson, whom he married in Millington, East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut, on 12 September 1763, and their three young children, Huldah, Statira, and Amasa, could join him in Campton. But the move probably didn't go according to plan.2

Detail from The Visit to the Nursery, c. 1775 by Jean Honoré Fragonard; National Gallery of Art

Just as Abel Willey had gone back and forth between Campton, New Hampshire, and East Haddam, Connecticut before his family joined him in the new town, Asa must have made at least one trip back home around May because his fourth child, Deborah, arrived on 19 March 1770. Asa and his wife Deborah probably waited until the spring rains ended, the high waters receded, and the mud dried, before they embarked with their newborn and three other children, ages six, four, and two, on the journey to their new home.3

Aaron Cleveland was another Original Proprietor who never developed the land in Campton. While the first division of Campton land didn't start until 14 March 1770, Joseph Spencer had already bought Aaron Cleveland's right to one hundred acres, and sold it to "Asa Spencer of Campton in the Province of New Hampshire" on 14 February 1769. This was Lot 41 that Asa had probably prepared for his family, and he claimed it on 25 June 1770, probably about the time he brought his family there to live. In turn, Asa sold John Holms his one hundred acres in the first division. Asa also bought Aaron Cleveland's right to the one hundred acres in the second division known as Lot 9. He sold Joseph Spencer his hundred acres in the second division and sold William Baker his right to an Intervale Lot. Asa died before the third division, and no one pitched his right to the one hundred acres in 1779.4

Asa was thirty-two years old and had seven children when he enlisted as a soldier in the 3rd New Hampshire Regiment, 6th Company on February 10, 1777, for the duration of the war. By June 1777, the regiment was at Fort Ticonderoga, which they abandoned on July 6th. They retreated to Fort Edward, New York. "The Americans were systematically felling trees, destroying bridges, and damming streams along the road..." On 20 October 1777, the regiment was assigned to the Main Continental Army, and they joined George Washington at Valley Forge. There, Asa died on 7 March 1778, probably from one of the many diseases that plagued the camp – influenza, typhus, typhoid, and dysentery. His fellow infantry members probably buried him, perhaps at the nearby Valley Friends' Burial Ground.5

The Continental Army arrived at Valley Forge on 19 December 1777 and set up their winter camp. They built about 2,000 log huts, 14 by 18 feet, and the accommodations were "tolerably comfortable." Clothing shortages were a problem, but there was enough food for subsistence meals. Photo and information from the Valley Forge National Park website.

Even though Asa was going off to war, he did not make a will. At his death, he had one hundred acres worth 100£ and 100 acres worth 20£ and an undivided share of land worth 7£, two cows, six sheep, farming equipment, kitchen equipment, furniture, a gun and powder horn, notes totalling 18£, 17£ cash, and 35 papers dollars. Deborah Spencer waited until Amasa reached his majority in 1789 before she declined to be the administrator. As the oldest son, it fell to Amasa to take responsibility for the estate. The court appointed John Southmayd as guardian of 14-year-old Asa Spencer and 12-year-old Israel Spencer. The court appointed Moses Baker as guardian to 19-year-old Deborah. (Guardians were tasked with caring for the assets of the minors and seeing to their education. They did not take custody of the children.) Since the court should have appointed a guardian for 17-year-old Hannah and did not, she was probably deceased, and Statira and Huldah did not require guardians since they had reached the age of majority.6

The court appointed Abel Willey, John Southmayd, and Edmund Marsh to determine Deborah's dower. The law entitled Deborah to the use of ⅓ of Asa's estate during her lifetime. Perhaps there was some conflict between Deborah and her children because the committee followed the letter of the law. She received use of some of the Intervale land and some of the land near the Beebe River and then she received use of "one third of the House as follows (viz) from the wall of the House on the East side of said house one third of the width of the house allowing her the privilege of passing and repassing through the Outer Door and the heirs the privilege of the Oven with the Widow."7

Photo from The Daniel Webster Birthplace website. Daniel Webster was born in 1782 in Salisbury, New Hampshire.

Deborah married Abel Willey's cousin, Jesse Willey, on 4 December 1783. Widowed in January of that year, Jesse brought at least four children to the marriage, and Deborah, with her six children, made for a very crowded house. Perhaps Amasa resented sharing his home with his mother's new family and insisted that she, her husband, the remaining step-children, and her two- and four-year-old sons with Jesse, stay in her ⅓ part of the house.8

But while one of Amasa's sisters and at least one of his step-sisters had moved out, the house was still crowded because Amasa had married, adding a wife and three children to the residence. In 1799, he sold Lot 41, with the understanding that his "honored" mother had use of her ⅓ Dower right during her lifetime. Deborah, her husband, Jesse Willey, their two sons, three of her children with Asa Spencer, and one or two of her step-children needed to make arrangements with Samuel Holmes if they wanted to use more than the ⅓ part.9

Asa's children, Statira and Israel, were the only known Spencers descended from the original settlers who remained in Campton. Of Asa's other children who lived to adulthood, Amasa moved to Lower Canada, Asa Jr. moved to Vermont, Huldah moved to Massachusetts, and it is uncertain what became of Deborah.10

FOOTNOTES

1. *Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1767-1826, Vol. 1, 42, Lot 45 [should be 46], pitched by Joseph Spencer on the original right of Peter Spencer on 4 June 1770; FamilySearch. Also, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1767-1826, Vol. 1, 85, Lot 8, pitched by Joseph Spencer on the original right of Peter Spencer on 4 June 1770; FamilySearch. And, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1767-1826, Vol. 1, 245, Two 13-acre lots of Intervale laid on the original rights of Peter Spencer and John Southmayd, surveyed 31 December 1777; FamilySearch. And, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1767-1826, Vol. 1, 297–298, Lot 42, pitched by John Southmayd on the original right of Peter Spencer, surveyed 23 April 1779; FamilySearch.*

2. *Grafton County, New Hampshire, Deeds, Vol. 10, 1787–1788, 48, Joseph Spencer of East Haddam, Hartford, Connecticut, sells Asa Spencer of Campton, New Hampshire, "one whole share or right of land in the town of Campton originally belonging to Aaron Cleveland an original grantee," 14 February 1769; FamilySearch. Also, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1777-1825, unpaginated, family of Asa Spencer and his wife Deborah, who were married at East Haddam on 12 September 1763; FamilySearch.*

3. *Deborah Carl, "The Original Grantees of Campton, New Hampshire: Part Three–Abel Willey," published 21 February 2025; Substack. Also, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1777-1825, unpaginated, family of Asa Spencer and his wife Deborah, who were married at East Haddam on 12 September 1763; FamilySearch. And, Hamilton Child, Gazetteer of Grafton County, NH, 1709–1886 (©1886), 200, list of Campton settlers, Asa Spencer, who arrived in 1770; FamilySearch.*

4. *Grafton County, New Hampshire, Deeds, Vol. 10, 1787–1788, 48, Joseph Spencer of East Haddam, Hartford, Connecticut, sells Asa Spencer of Campton, New Hampshire, "one whole share or right of land in the town of Campton originally belonging to Aaron Cleveland an original grantee," 14 February 1769; FamilySearch. Also, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1767–1826, Vol. 1, 40, Lot 41, pitched by Asa Spencer on the right of Aaron Cleveland on 25 June 1770; FamilySearch. And, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1767–1826, Vol. 1, 48, Lot 59, pitched by Samuel Holms on behalf of John Holms on the right of Asa Spencer on 24 October 1770; FamilySearch. And, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1767–1826, Vol. 1, 76, Lot 9, pitched by Asa Spencer on the right of Aaron Cleveland on 29 June 1772; FamilySearch. And, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1767–1826, Vol. 1, 65–66, Lot 12, pitched by Jabez Church on behalf of Joseph Spencer on the right of Asa Spencer on 22 October 1779; FamilySearch. And, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1767–1826, Vol. 1, 248–249, Six 13-acre lots laid out on the rights of Richard Sparrow...Asa Spencer...surveyed for Wm Baker on 26 April 1779; FamilySearch. And, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1767–1826, Vol. 1, Lot 6, drawn to the right of Asa Spencer on 19 March 1779; FamilySearch.*

5. *East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut, Vital Statistics, Vol. 1, late 1600 to 1890, 386, transcribed from original Vol. 4, 464, Asa son of Peter Spencer and Hannah Brown, born 14 June 1744; FamilySearch. Also, New Hampshire Regiment, Return of the Noncommissioned Officers and Privates in Capt. Benjamin Stone's Company, Asa Spencer, enlisted 7 February 1877 for the duration of the war, died 7 March 1778; FamilySearch. And, Muster Roll, database; Valley Forge Muster Roll, Search the Muster Roll > Asa Spencer. And, "New Hampshire Regiments in the Continental Army: 3rd New Hampshire Regiment," published in 2017; American Revolutionary War 1775 to 1783. And "The Saratoga Campaign: June 14–October 17, 1777, at Upstate New York, Vermont," published in 2017; American Revolutionary War 1775 to 1783. And, "The Encampment," published in 2025; Valley Forge Muster Roll. And, "Valley Friends' Burial Ground," updated 1 February 2021; The Valley Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.*

6. Grafton County, New Hampshire, Probate Estate Files 1789, Bedel–Wright, alphabetical order, Folder for Asa Spencer, unpaginated, Inventory of the Estate of Mr. Asa Spencer, 27 May 1789; FamilySearch. Also, Grafton County, New Hampshire, Probate Estate Files 1789, Bedel–Wright, alphabetical order, Folder for Asa Spencer, unpaginated, Letter from Jesse and Deborah Willey stating they decline to be the administrators of the estate and that Amasa Spencer should take care of it, dated 10 February 1789; FamilySearch. And, Grafton County, New Hampshire, Probate Estate Files 1789, Bedel–Wright, alphabetical order, Folder for Asa Spencer, unpaginated, Bond posted by John Southmayd, guardian of Asa Spencer Jr., dated 18 February 1789; FamilySearch. And, Grafton County, New Hampshire, Probate Estate Files 1789, Bedel–Wright, alphabetical order, Folder for Asa Spencer, unpaginated, Bond posted by John Southmayd, guardian of Israel Spencer, dated 18 February 1789; FamilySearch. And, Grafton County, New Hampshire, Probate Estate Files 1789, Bedel–Wright, alphabetical order, Folder for Asa Spencer, unpaginated, Bond posted by Moses Baker, guardian of Deborah Spencer, dated 7 June 1789; FamilySearch. And, Robert W. Baird, "Orphans & Guardians," Bob's Genealogy Filing Cabinet: Southern and Colonial Genealogies.

7. Grafton County, New Hampshire, Probate Estate Files 1789, Bedel–Wright, alphabetical order, Folder for Asa Spencer, unpaginated, Report from Abel Willey, John Southmayd, and Edmund Marsh who were appointed to set off one third of Asa Spencer's estate for his widow's dower: FamilySearch. And, David H. Bromfield, "Women and the Law of Property in Early America," Michigan Law Review, Vol. 85, Issue 5&6 (April-May, 1987), 1114; Michigan Law: University of Michigan.

8. Also, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1777-1825, unpaginated, Marriage of Jesse Willey and Deborah Spencer, 4 December 1783; FamilySearch. Also, family of Jesse Willey and Rhoda, who died 5 January 1783, and family of Jesse Willey and Deborah Spencer [listed as married 4 December 1784]; FamilySearch.

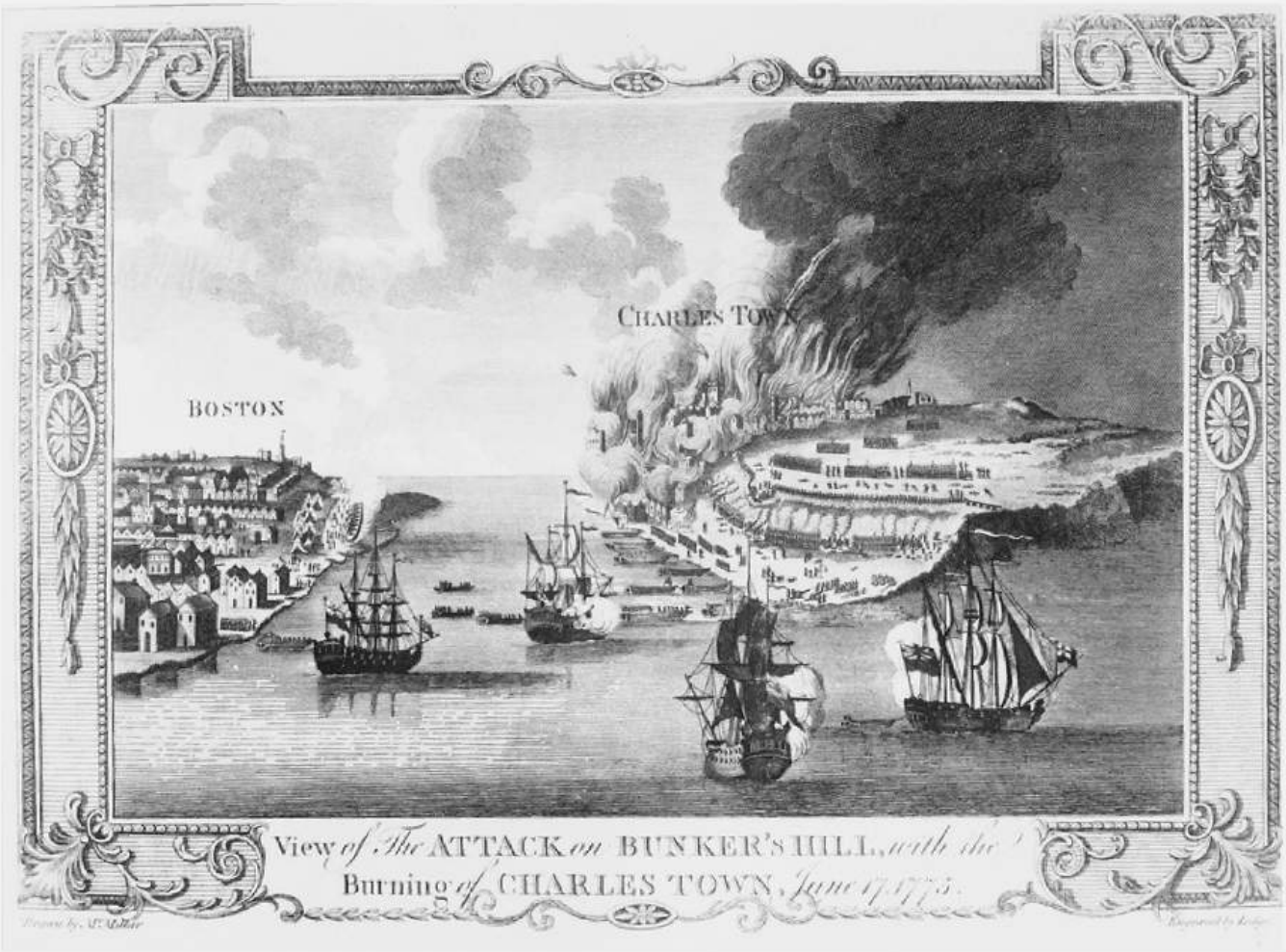
9. *Also, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1777-1825, unpaginated, Marriage of Ezra Tupper and Huldey Spencer, 9 June 1785 & Marriage of David Wooster and Rosannah Willey, 9 September 1788; FamilySearch. Also, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1777-1825, unpaginated, family of Amasa Spencer and Hannah; FamilySearch. And, Grafton County, New Hampshire, Deeds, Vol. 31, 1800–1801, 288, Amasa Spencer sells lot "numbered Forty one drawn to the original Right of Aaron Cleveland" to Samuel Holmes, 22 April 1799; FamilySearch.*

10. *1850 U.S. Census, Grafton County, New Hampshire, mortality schedule, Campton, handwritten page 185, Statira Spencer, January 1850; FamilySearch. Also, Find A Grave, database with images, Israel Spencer (1776-1852), memorial created by Scott Connor Barnard with gravestone image by Scott Connor Barnard; Blair Cemetery, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire. And, New Hampshire Pension Records, Vol. 21, 1776–1850, Fox, John–Gale, Daniel, compiled by Mrs. Amos G. Draper (©1922), handwritten page 14, Uriah Fox, Amasa Spencer of Stanstead, Lower Canada, testified he lived in Campton, NH in 1777 and knew Uriah Fox had enlisted in Campton; FamilySearch. And, "The Erysipelas in Derby, Vermont," The Caledonian (St. Johnsbury, VT), Tuesday, 16 May 1843, p. 2, col. 4, During the epidemic Amasa son of Asa Spencer died 29 March, Deborah wife of Asa Spencer died 29 March, and Asa Spencer died 4 April; Library of Congress. And, Hampshire–Plymouth County, Massachusetts, Births, Marriages, Deaths, Vol. 2, 1843, Town of Monson, 255, Huldah Tupper, died 2 May 1842; FamilySearch.*

Article shared from yourfamilyquest.substack.com/p/the-original-grantees-of-campton-204

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Deborah Carl



"View of the Attack on Bunker's Hill, with the Burning of Charles Town, June 17, 1775" created by John Mitchell, G.T. Raynal, and Antonio Zatta, and published in 1778 by Antonio Zatta in Venice.

***Credit**: In the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration, cataloged under the National Archives Identifier (NAID) 532896 Local Identifier: 148-GW-448*

ANNE YOUNG

1744–1837

A PENSION FOR ELEANOR DANA, WIDOW OF STEPHEN DANA SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Exploring a pension record from the American Revolutionary War

Sharing my family history. I am Australian with forebears from the United Kingdom and Europe. Anne blogs from https://anneyoungau.wordpress.com and https://anneyoungau.substack.com

SCAN ME

Stephen Dana, my second cousin seven times removed, was born on 9 June 1740 in Cambridge, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. His parents were Benjamin Dana (1689-1751), a shipmaster, and Anne Francis. Benjamin Dana served several times as a selectman, a member of the local government board of government.

Stephen was the eighth of their nine children. When he was ten years old his father Benjamin died and it was decided that Stephen should train as a carpenter.

from Plate IV. A view of the south part of Lexington by Ralph Earl (1775), engraved by Amos Doolittle; in the collection of the New York Public Library

On 16 September 1762 Stephen Dana married Eleanor Brown. He was 22 and she was 18.

The couple settled in Cambridge, in a part of town a few miles west of Boston, later incorporated as Brighton. They lived in the same

house from the time of their marriage. Eleanor lived there until her death in 1837. They had no children.

Stephen had been a member of the Massachusetts militia. When the Revolutionary War broke out he left home on 19 April 1775 and marched at the head of his company to fight the British at Lexington. In March 1776, when it marched to Roxbury, he was recorded as a captain in Colonel Samuel Thatcher's Regtiment of Militia. In 1777 Stephen served for two months in Colonel Josiah Whitney's Regiment in Rhode Island. In February 1778 he again served in Colonel Thatcher's Regtiment in Cambridge, and in August 1778 escorted troops of the Convention–British prisoners of war–to Rutland.

After the war, Stephen was a colonel of militia and a justice of the peace. He represented the community as an assessor and as a selectman, representative from Cambridge, 1787-88, 1792-93, and from Brighton, 1807-08 and signed the warrant for the first town meeting in Brighton when it separated from Cambridge. He served in the Massachusetts State Convention of September 1779, whose purpose was to frame a new Constitution for Massachusetts, and was a delegate to the convention of 1788, to discuss and ultimately decide whether Massachusetts would ratify the United States Constitution.

Stephen lived with Eleanor in Brighton until his death on 15 October 1822. His gravestone records him as "a prudent, pleasant friend; the father, legislator, judge, and peace maker of Brighton; extensively useful and greatly beloved by all who knew him".

Because he was 'a man of property' Stephen had not applied for a pension under the law of 1818.

Revolutionary War pensions began in 1776 with half pay for disabled soldiers. This was extended to men serving at the war's end and to their widows. Federal pension acts followed: in 1818 and 1820 for Continental Army veterans (with the 1820 act limited to those in need), in 1832 for militia veterans, and in 1836 for widows married before 1783. Applicants testified in court, and payments were issued every six months.

STEPHEN DANA, ESQR.,
DIED OCT. 15, 1822, AGED 82 YEARS
HE WAS A PRUDENT, PLEASANT FRIEND; THE FATHER,
LEGISLATOR, JUDGE AND PEACE MAKER OF BRIGHTON;
EXTENSIVELY USEFUL AND GREATLY BELOVED BY ALL
WHO KNEW HIM, BUT NEITHER WOULD HIS RARE MODESTY
HAVE APPROVED NOR WILL THIS STONE AFFORD FOR A
CONCISE DELINEATION OF HIS MOST PROMINENT AND
DISTINGUISHED VIRTUES.
MRS. ELEANOR DANA,
DIED NOV. 19, 1837, AGED 93 YEARS

The gravestone of Stephen and Eleanor Dana in Evergreen Cemetery, Brighton, Massachusetts: https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/170027574/stephen-dana

In 1837 his widow Eleanor Dana applied for a pension [application number R. 2,642] based on her husband's service.

On 19 April 1837 then 93 years old, still livingin their Brighton home, Eleanor Dana appeared before the Middlesex County Probate Judge at her home to apply for a pension under the Act of July 4, 1836. The probate judge took the trouble to set up his court in her house, for she was "unable from age infirmity to attend in open Court". It was the opinion of the judge that "she is a credible person & entitled to belief as a person of undoubted integrity".

Noting that all of his personal papers had long since been lost or destroyed, Eleanor Dana personally testified to her marriage, her long widowhood, and her husband's service during the Revolution.

> On this nineteenth day of April, One thousand eight hundred and thirty seven, personally appeared before the Judge of Probate for the County of Middlesex, Elenor Dana, a resident of the town of Brighton, in the County of Middlesex and State of Massachusetts aforesaid, aged Ninety three years who being first duly sworn according to law, doth on her oath make the following declaration, in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the act of Congress passed July 4, 1836: That she is the widow of Stephen Dana who was a Colonel in the Militia of Massachusetts in the service of the war of the Revolution; that according to the best of her knowledge and belief her said husband first went to the Lexington fight, he then being a captain in the Militia, and remained in the service in the vicinity of Boston with his company until he was promoted to a Colonel, and went to Rhode Island, where he stayed until the English left for the South. She further declares that she was married to the said Stephen Dana, on the sixteenth day of September Seventeen Hundred and Sixty two; that her husband the aforesaid Stephen Dana died on the fifteenth day of October 1822 and that she has remained a widow ever since that period, as will more fully appear by reference to the proof here annexed.

> *She further states that her said husband did not receive a pension under the law of 1818, by reason of his then being possessed of property. She further states, that she cannot now recollect the names of the officers under whom her husband served, nor the places where he went, except that he was in the neighborhood of Boston until the British troops evacuated it. He left home at the head of his company, on the nineteenth day of April 1775 & continued in service as it now seems to her for the greater part of the war. At least he was from home a great part of the time, altho she cannot be certain of the service he was engaged in. She does not recollect when he was promoted. She is confident he was in service in Rhode Island as she recollects hearing him speak of their mode of getting in & stacking their hay in Rhode Island & she presumes he was there in the summer season-- She has no papers or documents relative to his services, as all old papers belonging to her husband have been lost or destroyed many years- nor does she know any person now living who can testify to her husband's services & she must refer to the records files in the public offices for the particular proof of his services, beyond what she has stated as above.*
>
> *She & her husband lived in Cambridge in that part since incorporated into a new town by the name of Brighton, at the time the revolutionary war broke out. She now lives in the same house that they occupied when they first married & which she has occupied ever since - Her husband was for many years in public life as a town officer & representative in the general Court & State Convention & was extensively known. She has stated that she could not tell when her husband was promoted to the command of a Regiment, but according to her impression it was at or soon before the time when the British troops left Boston - her maiden name was Eleanor Brown*

Affidavits of Stephen Dana's service were attached to the application.

Eleanor Dana died just seven months after this hearing.

RELATED

- *The Lexington Alarm*
- *Dana, Elizabeth Ellery and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana. The Dana Family in America (Cambridge, Mass., 1956); p. 228-9*
- *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War (Wright & Potter Printing Co., Boston, 1896); Vol. 4, p. 389*
- *Debates and proceedings in the convention of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts held in the year 1788 and which finally ratified the Constitution of the United States Publication date 1856 viewed through archive.org*
- *Department of the Interior. Case Files of Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Applications Based on Revolutionary War Service, ca. 1800–ca. 1912, Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application File R. 2,642, Stephen Dana, Mass.. Retrieved from the National Archives, catalog.archives.gov/id/54366101*
- *Cain, A. R. (2020, May 25). "Fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses" – Captain Samuel Thatcher's Cambridge militia on April 19, 1775. Historical Nerdery. historicalnerdery01.blogspot.com/2020/05/fight-for-your-brethren-your-sons-and.html*

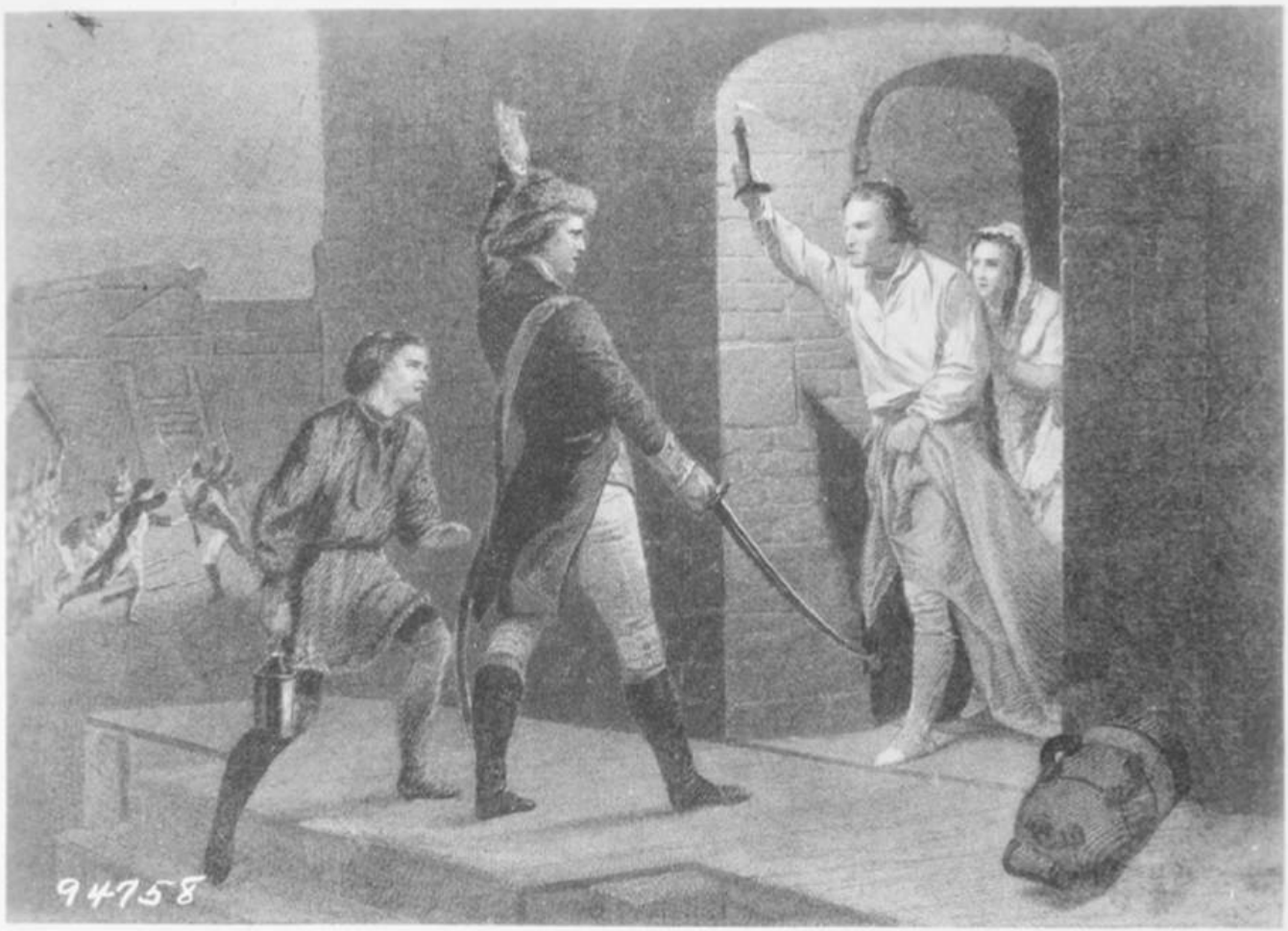
Article shared from anneyoungau.substack.com/p/a-pension-for-eleanor-dana-widow

Copyright 2026 Anne Young

- *Revolutionary War veteran and widow pensions (U.S. National Park Service). (2023, August 8). NPS.gov (U.S. National Park Service). www.nps.gov/articles/000/revolutionary-war-veteran-and-widow-pensions.htm*
- *Nudd, J. (2023, July 6). Using Revolutionary War pension files to find family information. Prologue Magazine Summer 2015, Vol. 47, No. 2 | Genealogy Notes National Archives. www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2015/summer/rev-war-pensions.html*

Wikitree:

- *Stephen Dana (1740-1822) https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Dana-240*
- *Eleanor (Brown) Dana (1744-1837) https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Brown-198568*



ETHAN ALLEN AND CAPT. DE LA PLACE

"Ethan Allen and Captain de la Place. May 1775" *The capture of Fort Ticonderoga, New York. Copy of engraving after Alonzo Chappel.*

Credit: *In the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration, cataloged under the National Archives Identifier (NAID) 531003 Local Identifier: 111-SC-94758*

DEBORAH CARL

1749–1834

THE ORIGINAL GRANTEES OF CAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Deborah blogs from https://YourFamilyQuest.com and her Substack publication of the same name. She also edits the Tips blog for https://MissionGenealogy.org.

SCAN ME

Deborah includes a voiceover for this post. To listen, please visit https://yourfamilyquest.substack.com/p/the-original-grantees-of-campton-204

SCAN ME

Abel Willey

> *BIG WARNING: There is an Abel Willey, married to Mary Mercy Fowler, living in Thornton, Grafton, New Hampshire, which is right next to Campton. The Abel Willey in Thornton and the Abel Willey in Campton are close in age, and both appear to have been lieutenants in the Revolutionary War. They are not the same man. There is a third Abel Willey (the oldest son of Abel Willey and Mary Mercy Fowler), married to Lydia Emery, and they were having children in Thornton at the same time Abel Willey and Lydia Church were having children in Campton.*

Chickens I, unknown artist, undated, photo of a drawing; Library of Congress.

And now to the story.

Abel Willey was probably a serious young man since his father had died, and as the man of the house, Abel probably felt obligated to provide for his mother and sisters. As a minor, he could not buy

property, and his mother and sisters helped purchase the right of land in Campton for him.1

How did the women earn the money? Maybe by selling eggs, butter, milk, wool, yarn, and preserves. Perhaps they took in lodgers, or the girls hired out to help in other households. As a widow, Mary (Holmes) Willey might have owned a shop or perhaps a tavern, but if the family was doing well economically, they probably would not have felt the need to move to Campton.2

The original grantees must have known Abel's family to trust him as a grantee. While Abel was a 1st cousin, 2x removed of Jared Spencer who originally petitioned the Governor for the land grant in 1761, and the Willeys, Spencers, Brainards, and Hungerfords were the original settlers of East Haddam, Connecticut, other than a general idea that the Willeys and the Spencers were connected, there probably wasn't a feeling of family obligation to include Abel in the Campton deal.3

Image generated at Canva using Dream Lab

But in the spring of 1766, Hobart Spencer brought the seventeen-year-old Abel Willey with him to Campton. Abel spent the farming season preparing a place for his family. He probably learned farming and building from doing odd jobs, and perhaps from working on his father's and uncles' farms. Clearing the land and building a house was hard work. Abel and Hobart had hundred-acre lots two and

three right next to each other, and they probably worked together on the jobs that were too big for one man. After the harvest, Abel returned to his mother's home in East Haddam, Connecticut, for the winter.4

He did that again the next year, and the following year in the spring of 1768, he brought his mother, Mary (Holmes) Willey, and his unmarried sisters with him. The year after that (1769), his brother-in-law, who was also his third cousin, Darius Willey, arrived with his wife, Abel's sister, Mary Holmes (Willey) Willey.5

Image generated at Canva using Dream Lab

When Darius and Mary came, she and her husband Darius loaded all their belongings on two horses, with Darius riding one with their son Darius, and Mary riding the other with their daughter Mary mounted behind her and their son Isaac in her arms. They traveled to "the Merrimac River probably not far from Nashua," where they probably boarded a boat and followed the river, which became the Pemigewasset further north. They disembarked about fifty miles north of Concord, and once again loaded and mounted the horses for the two-week ride to Abel's home.6

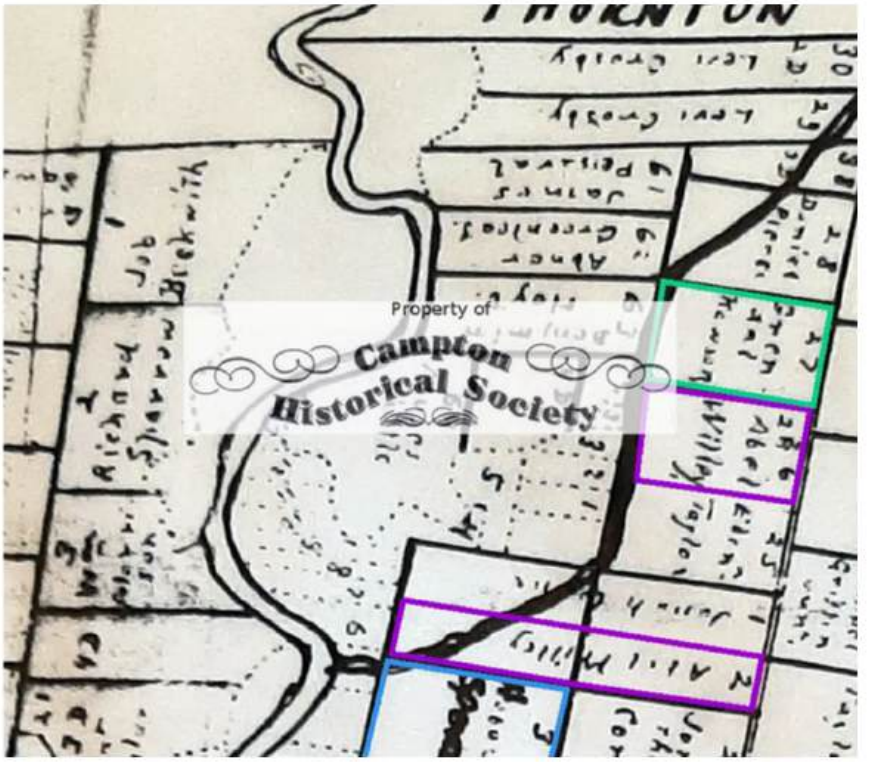
Abel, his mother, and his sisters probably also traveled to Campton via the Merrimac River. The spring waters were probably high and fast. Once they disembarked from the boat, the overland journey was most likely rough. The trails would have been muddy with no bridges over the streams, which would have been at their peak. Since spring was the rainy season, it was more than likely that some days they were traveling in the rain and sheltering in a wedge tent.7

Nathan Hale Schoolhouse, built in 1750, East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut, photographed by American Buildings Survey, 1933; Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/ct0351/

East Haddam was a thriving community with schools, churches, and businesses. Now the ladies were in the wilderness, having to use the bushes for a privy, and probably wondering about the dangers of natives and wild animals. Cooking over a fire was a time-consuming activity that would have been made more difficult to nearly impossible with damp wood, flint, and steel. No matter how primitive the house was, the ladies were probably relieved to leave the woods and see their new home.8

In February 1770, Abel reached the age of majority. He was 21 years old, and the other grantees must have had a great deal of respect for this hard-working young man. On June 4th of that year, he was elected to collect the monies owed to the community for the surveying and road work. Since he was one of the original grantees, on that same day, he pitched lot 2 in the 1st division of 100 acres in the upland, which was the lot he had settled when he arrived in 1766. He also pitched lot 26 in the 2nd division of 100 acres in the upland, which was two lots over from lot 2. And Darius bought the right of Grindal Rawson and pitched lot 27.9

Abel and Darius probably worked together to clear the land and plant rye, oats, corn, potatoes, and beans to provide for their families. They probably hunted to supplement the vegetables and grains. At first, there were no mills. Corn was pounded in a mortar, and peas and beans were a substitute for bread. Life probably settled into a pattern as the families worked to improve their properties and prepare for the winters.10



Platt map from the Campton Historical Society with Abel Willey's lots, Hobart Spencer's neighboring lot, and the lot Darius Willey bought from Grendel Rawson highlighted.

Then, news of the battles at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, reached Campton in April 1775. At some point, it appears Abel enlisted to serve in the Revolutionary War. In 1792 the town council voted Lieutenant Abel Willey, Major Samuel Holmes, and Lieutenant Moody Cook to a committee to look up all the notes, receipts, and other writings so Moses Little and Moses Baker could "settle with the States Committee with regard to money taken out of the States Treasury in the year 1776 to Supply this Town with arms and Ammunition."[11]

Image generated at Canva using Dream Lab. Lydia Church and Abel Willey were married by her brother, Rev. Selden Church. The bride would have worn her best dress or had one made for the wedding that she could later wear to church and other activities. The wedding most likely was performed in the bride's home.

Abel didn't wait for the war to end before marrying Lydia C. Church on 1 January 1778. She was the sister of Rev. Selden Church, who had come to Campton in 1774 and was the first settled minister. Perhaps Lydia had come with him, or perhaps she came later with her brother Jabez. Just over a year later, Abel and Lydia welcomed a daughter, Lydia Selden Willey, born on 25 February 1779.12

And the children kept on coming – Esther born 31 March 1781, John born 15 May 1783, Levi born 16 January 1786, Amos born 22 November 1787, Diodate born 30 March 1789, Christopher born 5 March 1791, Mary born 9 August 1793, Miriam born 29 May 1796, and Mehitable born 16 May 1800. Campton's land was poor, and farming probably wasn't enough to support his large family. Throughout the years, Able worked for the town of Campton as a selectman, on committees, and as a constable, but he also set up a tavern as early as 1787, and he was still running it at the time of his death on 20 March 1834.13

Learn more about the Spencer Family:

- *The Grant Issued to Jared Spencer*

- *Col. Joseph Spencer and Dr. Joseph Spencer*

FOOTNOTES

1. *Robert W. Baird, "Legal Age," Bob's Genealogy Filing Cabinet: Southern and Colonial Genealogies. Also, Rev. Isaac Willey, "The Early History of Campton," in Proceedings at the Centennial Celebration of the Town of Campton, New Hampshire 12 September 1867 (Concord: A.G. Jones, 1868), 16; FamilySearch.*

2. *Micki M. Caskey, "Colonial Women," part of the Iroquois Confederacy and the US Constitution curriculum developed by Micki M. Caskey, Theresa J. Rapida, and Mark Wubbold, Portland State University.*

3. *Hobart and Abel were related through Isaac Willey and Joanna Lutten – Abel Willey was a great-great-grandchild, and Hobart Spencer was a great-grandchild, making them 2nd cousins 1x removed.*

4. *Rev. Isaac Willey, "The Early History of Campton," in Proceedings at the Centennial Celebration of the Town of Campton, New Hampshire 12 September 1867 (Concord: A.G. Jones, 1868), 16; FamilySearch. Also, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records Vol. 1, 1767-1826, 21–22, Lot 2 pitched by Abel Willey and Lot 3 pitched by Hobart Spencer; FamilySearch.*

5. *Rev. Isaac Willey, "The Early History of Campton," in Proceedings at the Centennial Celebration of the Town of Campton, New Hampshire 12 September 1867 (Concord: A.G. Jones, 1868), 16; FamilySearch. Also, Family Memorial of Darius Willey and Wife With Their Children, August 15th, 1865 (San Francisco, California: Bacon & Company, 1868), 6–7; FamilySearch. Darius Willey was a great-great-grandson of Isaac Willey and Joanna Lutten, making him a 3rd cousin of Abel Willey and a 2nd cousin 1x removed of Hobart Spencer.*

6. *Family Memorial of Darius Willey and Wife With Their Children, August 15th, 1865 (San Francisco, California: Bacon & Company, 1868), 6–7; FamilySearch.*

7. *Family Memorial of Darius Willey and Wife With Their Children, August 15th, 1865 (San Francisco, California: Bacon & Company, 1868), 7; FamilySearch. Also, John U. Reese, "Soldiers' Shelter on Campaign During the War for Independence: Tents in the Armies of the Revolution, Part I," RevWar'75.*

8. *"Town History," condensed from A Brief History of East Haddam, Connecticut, written by Karl Stofko and Rachel Gibbs, East Haddam Conn.*

9. *Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records Vol. 1, 1767-1826, 122, Abel Willey chosen collector & 21–22, Lot 2 pitched by Abel Willey & 33-34, Lot 26 pitched by Abel Willey & 34 Lot 27 pitched by Darius Willey; FamilySearch.*

10. *Family Memorial of Darius Willey and Wife With Their Children, August 15th, 1865 (San Francisco, California: Bacon & Company, 1868), 7 & 10; FamilySearch.*

11. *Harold B. Trombley, Location of Graves of New Hampshire Revolutionary Soldiers, 1950, 34; FamilySearch. Also, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records & Vital 1777–1825, 80, Lt Abel Willey chosen to serve on a committee regarding money owed for arms and ammunition for Campton purchased in 1776; FamilySearch.*

12. *Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records & Vital 1777–1825, vital section, unnumbered, image 198, marriage of Abel Willey and Lydia Church & image 186, family of Abel Willey and Lydia Church, Lydia their daughter was born 25 February 1779; FamilySearch. Also, Family Memorial of Darius Willey and Wife, 35; FamilySearch. And, Franklin Bowditch Dexter, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History Vol. 111, May, 1763–July, 1778 (New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1903), 109, entry for Selden Church, third son and child of John Church and Lydia Chapman; GoogleBooks. And, New Hampshire Index to Marriages up to 1900, card for Abel Willey and Lydia Church, 1 January 1778; FamilySearch, Lydia was listed as the daughter of John Church and Lydia Chapman.*

    Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records & Vital 1777–1825, vital section, unnumbered, image 186, family of Abel Willey and Lydia Church, Esther their daughter born 31 March 1781, John their son born 15 May 1783, Levi their son born 1786; FamilySearch. Also, New Hampshire Index to Births to 1900, card for Amos Willey, 22 November 1787 & card for Deadale [should be Diodate] Willey, 30 March 1789 & card for Christopher Willey, 5 March 1791 & card for Mary Willey, 9 August 1793 & card for Miriam Willey, 29 May 1796 & card for Mehitable Willey, 16 May 1800; FamilySearch. And, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records & Vital 1777–1825, 29, Abel Willey on committee to plan 8 pews in the meeting house and "sell the same", 21 March 1780 & 71, on committee to agree with Lt. Tupper in exchange of houses, 15 March 1791 & 72, Abel Willey, selectman, order to notify legal voters of an upcoming meeting, 31 May 1791 & 194, Abel Willey, Constable, notified legal voters of the upcoming meeting, 25 February 1802 & 278, Lt Abel Willey on committee to divide the town into school districts, 29 August 1808; FamilySearch. *And, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records Vol. 1, 1767-1826, 317, Abel Willey on committee to complete division of hundred acre lots in the 3rd division, 22 December 1791 & 318 on committee to survey lands and lots and ascertain which properties belong in Plymouth and which in Campton,15 February 1792 & 378, on committee to settle all the propritors' accounts, 11 October 1798; FamilySearch.*

And, Grafton County, New Hampshire, Probate Estate Files, 1773-1950, Bedel-Wright, 1789, alphabetical order, file of Asa Spencer, unpaginated, Abel Willey on committee to set off dower of Deborah Spencer from the estate of her late husband, Asa Spencer, 23 June 1790; FamilySearch. And, Find A Grave, memorial 64119041, Abel Willey (1749-1834), created by Jessica, gravestone photograph by GRCheney; Campton Hollow Cemetery, Campton Hollow, Grafton, New Hampshire. And, New Hampshire Index to Deaths up to 1900, cards are indexed by the first and third letter of the last name and first letter of given name, card for Abel Willey, 20 March 1834; FamilySearch.

Article shared from yourfamilyquest.substack.com/p/the-original-grantees-of-campton-bee

Copyright 2026 Deborah Carl

ERIN HOOVER

Erin blogs from Stories in the Records at https://storiesintherecords.substack.com.

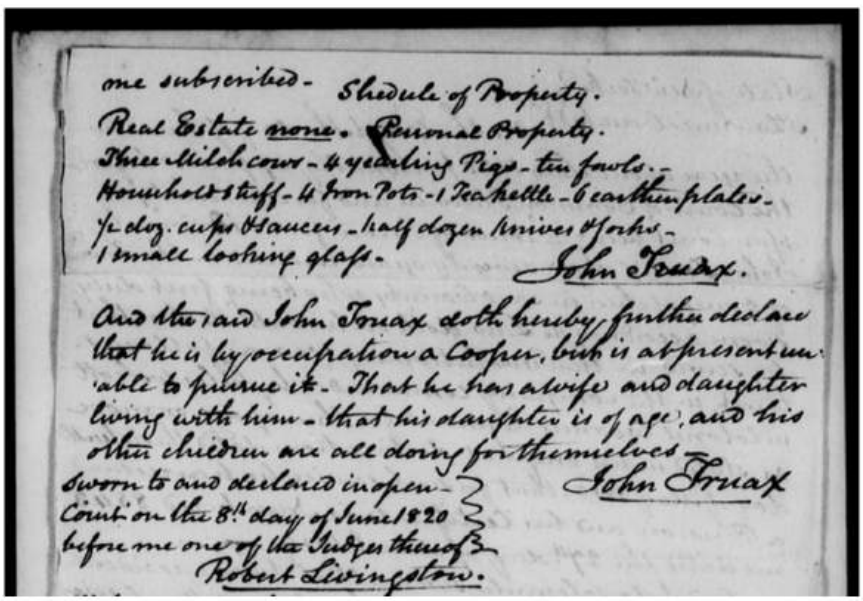
SCAN ME

1749–1825

THREE COWS AND A TEA KETTLE

John Truax 1749-1825

Three milk cows. Four yearling pigs. Ten fowl. Four iron pots. One tea kettle. Six earthen plates. Half a dozen cups and saucers. Half a dozen knives and forks. One small looking glass.



one subscribed - Shedule of Property.
Real Estate none. Personal Property.
Three Milch cows - 4 yearling Pigs - ten fowls -
Household Stuff - 4 Iron Pots - 1 Tea Kettle - 6 earthen plates -
½ doz. cups & saucers - half dozen knives & forks -
1 small looking glass.
John Truax.

And the said John Truax doth hereby further declare that he is by occupation a Cooper, but is at present unable to pursue it. That he has a wife and daughter living with him - that his daughter is of age, and his other children are all doing for themselves -
John Truax
Sworn to and declared in open Court on the 8th day of June 1820 before me one of the Judges thereof
Robert Livingston.

The property schedule John Truax filed with the Court of Common Pleas, St. Lawrence County, New York, June 6, 1820. The court valued everything he owned at $84.62.

This is what my 5x great grandfather, John Truax, owned in 1820, at age 70, when he appeared before the Court of Common Pleas in St. Lawrence County, New York, to prove he was poor enough to keep his pension. The court valued his property at $84.62. He stated he was a cooper, a craftsman who shaped barrel staves and fitted iron hoops to make watertight containers, but was "at present unable to follow it." He had a wife and daughter living with him, his other children grown and gone.

The pension, once he finally received it, was $8 a month. To put that in perspective: a working cooper in good health might make a dozen barrels in that time, selling each for $2 or $3. John could no longer make barrels at his age. It had taken two years, three witness affidavits, and this itemized inventory of near-poverty to secure that $8. The United States government needed proof that John Truax had served in the Revolutionary War and proof that he now had almost nothing.

There's no evidence he ever received a land grant for his service, despite such grants being common for Continental soldiers. What remained of his service, 40 years later, was testimony and an inventory.

Taking Up Arms, 1775–1777

By 1775, John was already a married man with a young family in Schenectady; he and Annatje Van Der Hyden had wed around 1771, and their first child was born in May 1773. When the war came, he enlisted in the Tryon County Minutemen, part of the local rapid-response force that formed the first line of defense for the Mohawk Valley.

Then, in March 1777, at age 27, John made a different choice. He enlisted in Captain Giles Wolcott's company of Colonel Seth Warner's Regiment for "the duration of the war." This wasn't militia duty with brief musters close to home. This was the Continental Army: formal enlistment, extended service, assignments wherever the northern frontier required troops.

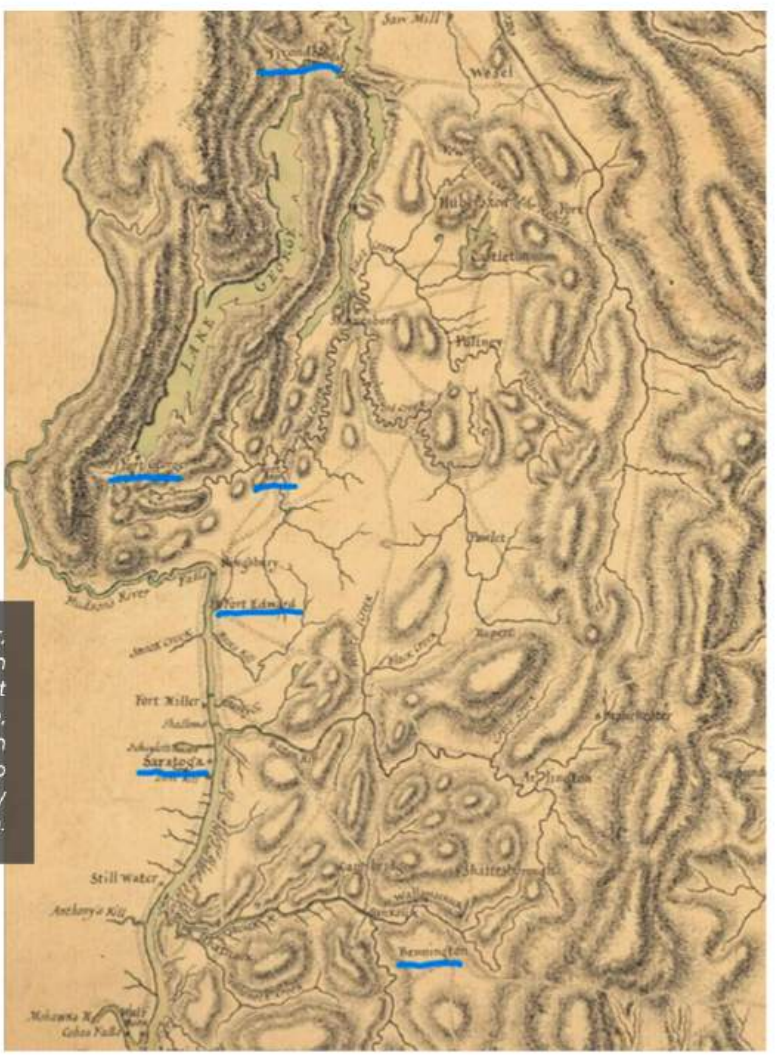
Warner's Regiment was part of the Continental establishment, Vermont troops assigned to hold the Lake Champlain–Lake George corridor against British forces moving south from Canada. They were called the Green Mountain Boys, though this iteration was different from Ethan Allen's earlier militia. These were regulars: long-term soldiers operating under Continental authority.

The Northern Frontier, 1777–1780

The war came quickly. By July 1777, British General Burgoyne was pushing south, laying siege to Fort Ticonderoga. Warner's Regiment helped cover the American retreat, a rear-guard action that bought time for the main army to escape. In August, the regiment reinforced

General John Stark at Bennington, arriving as Hessian reinforcements tried to rescue a British foraging party. The American victory crippled Burgoyne's supply lines and contributed to his eventual surrender at Saratoga.

Between battles, there were months of garrison duty... the unglamorous, risky work of holding a thin frontier. Fort Stark. Fort George. Albany. The constant movement wasn't random; Warner's Regiment was one of the few seasoned Continental units available to plug gaps along the vulnerable Hudson–Lake George route. Companies rotated between exposed posts, shifted when intelligence suggested a new British thrust, and marched periodically to Albany to draw clothing, provisions, and pay.



The Lake Champlain and Lake George corridor, ca. 1777. This manuscript map shows the terrain John's regiment moved through repeatedly: Fort Ticonderoga at the northern end of Lake George, Fort George at the southern tip, and the Hudson River route to Saratoga and Albany below. Map by Mr. Medcalfe, Library of Congress Geography and Map Division.

For John, this meant standing guard on wooden bastions in the cold, watching forest approaches for raiders. It meant scouting patrols, small parties under a lieutenant, sent to check reported sightings or survey roads and fords, knowing that a routine patrol could turn into

For John, this meant standing guard on wooden bastions in the cold, watching forest approaches for raiders. It meant scouting patrols, small parties under a lieutenant, sent to check reported sightings or survey roads and fords, knowing that a routine patrol could turn into an ambush in minutes.

In July 1778, the muster roll notes that John was "On Command with Lt Swits..." the same Walter Swits who would testify on his behalf 40 years later. By September, he was back at Fort Stark. In early 1779, he was on command to Albany, then to Fort George by summer. This was the rhythm of frontier war: long stretches of tedium and hard labor, punctuated by sudden violence.

By 1780, the war had shifted. The major campaigns were in the South now, but the northern frontier grew more dangerous. British raiders, Loyalist forces, and Native warriors struck with increasing frequency, burning settlements, taking prisoners, destroying supplies. Fort George sat at the southern end of Lake George, isolated and vulnerable.

By October 11, 1780, the garrison at Fort George, commanded by Captain John Chipman, had been waiting for provisions for two days. Chipman sent a messenger to Fort Edward for supplies. The messenger got about four miles before he was fired on by enemy scouts and fled back to the fort. Chipman, thinking the enemy force was small, maybe 30 or 40, sent a detachment of 48 men under Captain Thomas Sill to clear the road.

Sill's men encountered not a small scouting party but the advance elements of Major Christopher Carleton's raiding force: nearly 800 British regulars, Loyalists, and warriors of the Canadian Seven Nations. The American detachment was surrounded. After a brief, brutal fight, 27 men lay dead, eight were captured. Only 14 escaped.

At the fort, Chipman fired a six-pound cannon three times as the British appeared on the heights. It was futile. Carleton sent a flag of truce. The garrison had perhaps 18 rounds per man, two days' provisions at most, and no hope of relief. Chipman surrendered on terms: the Americans would become prisoners of war, women and children could go home, and no warriors would enter the fort until British troops took possession.

John went home to his wife and children in Schenectady. He had been fighting since 1775...first as a minuteman, then nearly four years as a Continental.

John Truax survived. The records don't say whether he was with Sill's detachment and escaped, or remained in the fort with Chipman and was taken prisoner. He was a private... the kind of soldier whose movements rarely made it into official accounts. What the pension the pension file states is that he was paroled at Saratoga and permitted to return home to Schenectady. On that day, Warner's Regiment was "almost wholly cut up and destroyed." On January 1, 1781, it was officially disbanded.

After Fort George

John went home to his wife and children in Schenectady. He had been fighting since 1775...first as a minuteman, then nearly four years as a Continental. He had fought at Bennington, retreated from Ticonderoga, survived Fort George. The regiment no longer existed. The war was not over, but his part in it seemed to be.

And then he went back.

On April 23, 1781, John Truax mustered into Captain Lawrence Gross's company of Colonel Marinus Willett's Regiment of New York Levies. Why he made this choice, the records don't say directly... but the context suggests the answer: the Mohawk Valley was still burning. Stone Arabia had just been hit, farms reduced to ash.

New York's militia law required service from men 16 to 50, with fines steep enough, $10 to $20, that a working man couldn't afford to refuse. And everyone else was going. The Swits, the Lighthalls, the Fondas...all those Dutch Reformed families from Schenectady were mustering. In a community that tight, not showing up when your neighbors were defending their farms wasn't really an option.

Willett's Levies were temporary troops raised specifically to defend the Mohawk Valley after the devastating British-Loyalist raids of 1780. Sir John Johnson and Joseph Brant had led coordinated attacks that burned hundreds of buildings and killed or captured hundreds of people. Willett's mission was to stop them. The Levies paid about $6.67 a month plus rations, not much, but steady pay in a valley where normal life had stopped.

The muster roll for November 1, 1781, lists John Truax "On Command Schenectady." What that meant...garrison duty, protecting the town, escorting supply wagons, perhaps patrol work, the records don't specify, but Willett's campaign was successful. His Levies protected settlements, defended the critical grain harvest that fed the Continental Army, and in October raided Johnstown, forcing the British into retreat and securing the valley.

John served alongside men he'd known for years. Walter Swits and William Lighthall from Warner's Regiment had also joined Willett's Levies. So had Jellis Fonda, who served as a corporal in Captain Gross's company. These men would remember.
John served through the war's end.

The Affidavits

When the fighting finally stopped, John returned to his family and his trade. Coopering was skilled work...years of apprenticeship to learn how to split staves from seasoned oak, shape them with a drawknife, fit them into the circular form, and hammer iron hoops tight enough to hold water or whiskey without leaking. It was good work when a man was young and strong, with steady hands and a strong back. By 1820, at age 70, he could no longer do it.

The Act of Congress of March 18, 1818, provided pensions for indigent veterans of the Revolutionary War. On May 16, 1818, John appeared before Nathan Ford, First Judge of St. Lawrence County, and swore to his service: enlisted spring 1777, served in Warner's Regiment until Fort George was taken and the regiment destroyed, paroled at Saratoga, re-entered service the following spring and served until the peace. He was "in reduced circumstances, and stands in need of the assistance of his country for support."

The War Department sent the application back. They needed better proof of service, better certification of poverty.

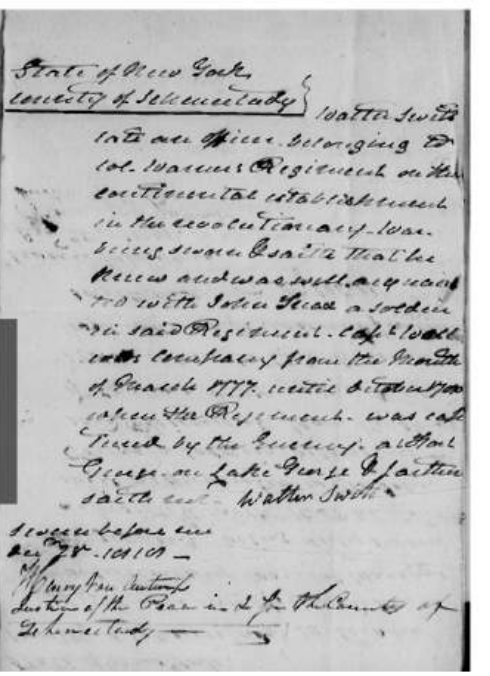
Three men came forward.

Walter Swits, who had served as an officer in Warner's Regiment and gone on patrol with John at Fort George, swore he knew John Truax from March 1777 until October 1780 when the regiment was captured. William Lighthall, also an officer in Warner's Regiment, gave the same testimony, adding that he himself was taken prisoner in October 1780. Jellis Fonda, who had served as a corporal in Captain Gross's company of Willett's Levies alongside John, swore he knew John in 1780 and for nine months in 1781.

These were men who had been there. They stood before justices of the peace in Schenectady and swore that yes, John Truax had served, and yes, they had been there with him.

In 1820, Congress tightened the requirements. Veterans had to prove not just service but genuine poverty. On June 6, 1820, John appeared before the court again and provided the schedule: three cows, four pigs, ten chickens, a few pots, a tea kettle, some dishes, a small mirror. That was everything. The court certified the total value at $84.62.

The continued pension was granted: $8 a month.



Affidavit of Walter Swits, December 28, 1818, Schenectady County, New York. Swits had served as an officer in Warner's Regiment and gone on patrol with John at Fort George. Pension application S.8543, National Archives.

What the War Cost

John Truax died May 25, 1825. He reportedly drowned while crossing the St. Lawrence River. He was 75 years old. The pension file noted his death on October 27, 1829.

This is what the Revolution cost one soldier: service from the war's beginning in 1775 through its end, starting as a minuteman defending his home region, then nearly four years as a Continental on the northern frontier, the destruction of his regiment, the choice to return and fight on. Then decades of ordinary life...marriage, work, children, ending in poverty documented by an inventory of household goods. The Republic's gratitude came in 1819, more than 40 years after he first took up arms: $8 a month, after he proved he owned almost nothing.

And his brothers-in-arms, men who had served beside him for years, who had survived the same battles, the same disaster, had to swear before judges that it had all happened, that they had been there together, and that he deserved his $8 a month.

Three cows and a tea kettle. That's what remained.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

> *Erin is a family historian and a fifth-great-granddaughter of John Truax, a Revolutionary War ancestor whose years of military service were later reduced to sworn testimony and an inventory of possessions meant to prove he was poor enough to keep his pension. Her family is rooted in the Pacific Northwest, with deeper lines reaching back into early American history. She wrote this story to honor one ancestor's place in that larger story and to understand how a life of service can be flattened by the records that remain. This narrative is reconstructed from pension files, muster rolls, affidavits, and battle accounts held in the National Archives. She uses AI models to organize research, gather historical context, and draft sections, but the genealogy work of finding sources, verifying facts, and making sense of the story, along with the voice, are her own.*

SOURCES

- *Declaration, John Truax, May 16, 1818, St. Lawrence County, New York; Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, pension application S.8543, John Truax; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, Fold3 (www.fold3.com/).*

- *Declaration and Schedule of Property, John Truax, June 6, 1820, St. Lawrence County, New York; Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, pension application S.8543, John Truax; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, Fold3 (www.fold3.com/).*

- *Certification, Joseph York, Clerk of Court of Common Pleas, July 8, 1820, St. Lawrence County, New York; Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, pension application S.8543, John Truax; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, Fold3 (www.fold3.com/).*

- *Pension certificate notation, pension application S.8543, John Truax; "Inscribed on the Roll of New-York at the rate of 8 Dollars per month, to commence on the 16. of May, 1818; Certificate of Pension issued the 27. of March 1819 and sent to Nathan Ford, Judge, Ogdensburg, St. Lawrence Co. N.Y."; Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, Fold3 (www.fold3.com/).*

- *Administrative notation, pension application S.8543, John Truax, "Returned for further evidence of service in Warners reg't and the Judge's certificate as to indigent circumstances," received June 6, 1818; Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, Fold3 (www.fold3.com/).*

- *Affidavit, Walter Swits, December 28, 1818, Schenectady County, New York; Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, pension application S.8543, John Truax; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, Fold3 (www.fold3.com/).*

- *Affidavit, William Lighthall, December 28, 1818, Schenectady County, New York; Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, pension application S.8543, John Truax; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, Fold3 (www.fold3.com/).*

- Affidavit, Jellis Fonda, May 28, 1819, Schenectady County, New York; Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, pension application S.8543, John Truax; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, Fold3 (www.fold3.com/).

- Letter, Mrs. Orlando Harris to Commissioner of Pensions, March 4, 1918, pension application S.8543, John Truax; Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, Fold3 (www.fold3.com/).

- Compiled service record, John Truax, company muster roll, Captain Giles Wolcott's Company, Colonel Seth Warner's Battalion, January 3, 1777 to June 15, 1777, roll dated June 15, 1777; War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, Fold3 (www.fold3.com/).

- Compiled service record, John Truwax [sic], company muster roll, Captain Giles Wolcott's Company, April 20 to July 15, 1778, roll dated Fort Stark July 15, 1778, remarks "On command with Lt Swits"; War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, Fold3 (www.fold3.com/).

- Compiled service record, John Truax, company muster roll, Captain Giles Wolcott's Company, July 15 to September 1, 1778, roll dated Fort Stark September 1, 1778; War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, Fold3 (www.fold3.com/).

- Compiled service record, John Truax, company muster rolls, Captain Giles Wolcott's Company, January–February 1779, roll dated Fort Stark March 22, 1779, remarks "On command to Albany"; and March–June 1779, roll dated Fort George

July 14, 1779, remarks "On command at Fort Stark"; War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, Fold3 (www.fold3.com/).

- *Mr. Medcalfe, [Lake Champlain and Lake George...] (1777?), manuscript map; Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, call number G3802.C45 1777 .M4; digital image, Library of Congress (www.loc.gov/resource/g3802c.ar107500/).*
- *Return of Captain Giles Wolcott's Company, May 8, 1780, listing John Truax; "United States, Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775–1783," FamilySearch (www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QL65-KF8S).*
- *Muster Roll, Captain Lawrence Gross's Company, Regiment of New York Levies commanded by Marinus Willett, April–November 1781, roll dated Fort Plain November 1, 1781; War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; transcription, FamilySearch (www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-99WB-7VTM).*
- *Jonathan Pearson, Contributions for the Genealogies of the Descendants of the First Settlers of the Patent and City of Schenectady, from 1662 to 1800 (n.p., 1873), entry for Johannes Truax; transcription, Schenectady History (www.schenectadyhistory.org/families/firstsettlers/t_vams.html).*
- *"Tryon County Battalion of Minute Men," American Wars (americanwars.org/ny-american-revolution/tryon-county-battalion-of-minute-men.htm).*
- *Willis T. Hanson, A History of Schenectady During the Revolution (Brattleboro, Vermont: E. L. Hildreth & Co., 1916); chapter 70, "Colonel Willett, Valley Commander," Schenectady History (www.schenectadyhistory.org/resources/mvgw/history/070.html).*
- *Colonel Seth Warner to George Washington, November 28, 1779, Fort George, N.Y.; Founders Online, National Archives (founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-23-02-0367).*
- *"Colonel Seth Warner" and "A Brief History of the Original Regiment," Warner's Regiment (http://www.warnersregiment.org/).*
- *New York Militia Law, October 9, 1779; Fort Plank Historical Site (www.fort-plank.com/1775_Militia_Law.html).*
- *Clifford Mullen, "The Battle of Lake George 11 October 1780," Fort George Advice (Fall 2006), Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance; PDF (lakegeorgebattlefield.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/LGBPA-newsletter-Fall-06.pdf).*
- *Russell P. Bellico, "British Incursions into the Lake Valleys: Fort George 1778–1780," Fort George Post (Summer 2022), Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance (formerly Fort George Advice); PDF (lakegeorgebattlefield.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Newsletter-Summer-2022-FINAL.pdf).*
- *Willett Family Papers, letterbook to Gov. Clinton, ca. 1780–81, New York State Library, Manuscript Collection SC16670 (www.nysl.nysed.gov/msscfa/sc16670).*

Article shared from https://storiesintherecords.substack.com/p/three-cows-and-a-tea-kettle

Copyright 2026 Erin Hoover

ANNE YOUNG

Sharing my family history. I am Australian with forebears from the United Kingdom and Europe. Anne blogs from https://anneyoungau.wordpress.com and https://anneyoungau.substack.com

SCAN ME

1751–1793

FRANCIS SKELLY, A DIARIST DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR

My sixth great granduncle kept a diary while he served with Fraser's Highlanders fighting the rebels during the American Revolutionary War.

Gordon Skelly (1741 – 1771), one of my sixth great grandfathers, was a Captain of the Royal Navy. In June 1758 Skelly saw action at the Siege of Louisbourg and at the Capture of Quebec in September 1759. He kept a journal from 1757 to 1759, which is now of considerable interest to historical collectors. It was sold in 2003 for $US141,900.

Anecdote of the bravery of the Scotch piper of the 71st Highland Regiment, at the Battle of Vimiero, 1808 Collection of the National Army Museum: Image number: 141158

Skelly's brother Francis (1751-1793) also kept a diary as an officer with the 71st Regiment of Foot, a British Army regiment of infantry raised in 1775 during the American Revolutionary War. The regiment was unofficially known as Fraser's Highlanders.

A transcript of a portion of his diary covering the period April 1779 to September 1779, edited by Charles C. Jones, Jr., was published in the Magazine of American History in August and November 1891.

Jones stated the diary was in the "Abertoff collection" but I have found no other reference to this collection. He seems to be referring to the Abertarff collection compiled by Charles Fraser Mackintosh.

In November 1775 Colonel Fraser raised a Highland Regiment of two battalions, the 71st Regiment of Foot, known as Fraser's Highlanders. Officers of the first battalion included Francis Skelly. On 11 May 1776 Lieutenant Francis Skelly's promotion to captain was gazetted along with other appointments to the regiment.

The regiment sailed on 21 April 1776 with a fleet bound for America. The voyage took two months. The fleet suffered a storm. Some ships were captured by American privateers. Most of the regiment joined Howe's army on Staten Island and fought in the New York campaign of 1776. In 1777 some of the regiment fought in the Philadelphia campaign and a contingent remained in New York and participated in the taking of Forts Clinton and Montgomery. From 1778 the regiment was in Savannah, Georgia, and fought at Brier Creek, Stono Creek, Augusta, and the siege of Savannah. (Some of this period is covered by the transcript of Francis Skelly's diary, published in 1891.) In December 1779 the regiment fought at the siege of Charleston. In 1880 the first battalion was captured at the Battle of Cowpens. (I do not know if Francis Skelly was among the 712 prisoners taken in this engagement.) The second battalion fought with the army of Lord Cornwallis until it was interned following the battle of Yorktown in October 1781. Below are two excerpts from Francis Skelly's diary:

Purisburg 28 April 1779

The portion of the diary published in 1891 begins with 28 April 1779 and the British army crossing the Savannah river to arrive at Purrysburg, South Carolina, about 12 miles (19 km) upriver from Savannah.

Purisburg 28 April 1779

The portion of the diary published in 1891 begins with 28 April 1779 and the British army crossing the Savannah river to arrive at Purrysburg, South Carolina, about 12 miles (19 km) upriver from Savannah.

> *April 1779.*
> *28th. British Army under Maj Gen Prevost left Ebenezar. First division consisting of the Lt Infantry and two Battns 71st Regt embarked in flat Boats at Abercorn cross'd the Savannah River four miles below Purisburg, entered the swamps that Evening- All night wading thro' them.*
> *29th. At Sunrise arrived on dry ground two miles from Purisburg. The honble Col' Maitland commanded the first division. He attacked the Town (which was but poorly defended) took it by two o'clock this morning. Rebels retreated towards Bee Creek.*
>
> *30th. The remainder of the Army arrived at Purisburg. They consisted of two Troops of Dragoons, Grenadier Com of the 60th Regt two Batlns Hessians, N York Volunt, one Batln Delancy's, part of Skinner's Regt, two small Corps of Carolinians, and some irregulars & Indians, a detachment of Artillery-eight light field pieces, and a small Howitz. Marched this evening to Turkey Hill.*

Today the settlement of Purrysburg is abandoned. As well as a marker for the original settlement, the site is noted as an historic site associated with the Revolution.

The website SC250 commemorating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in South Carolina says of the site: "During the Revolution, Purrysburg served as the first headquarters of the American army under Major General Benjamin Lincoln. Major General Robert Howe fled with his remaining forces to Purrysburg after Georgia was taken by the British."

Battle of Stono Ferry 20 June 1779

The 71st took part in the Battle of Stono Ferry on 20 June 1779. Wikipedia describes the battle as "the rear guard from a British expedition retreating from an aborted attempt to take Charleston held off an assault by poorly trained militia forces under American General Benjamin Lincoln. ... The battle began well for the Americans. They engaged the British positions with small arms and cannon fire for an hour, at which point they advanced to the abatis. Of the Highlanders, two companies resisted until only 11 men were left standing; a Hessian battalion finally broke. Here Maitland shifted his forces in an attempt to counter the larger threat posed by

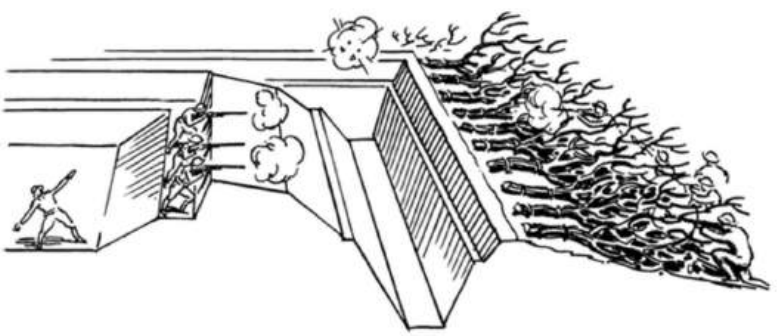
Huger's wing. The Hessians rallied and returned to the fight, and reserves were brought across the bridge. Lincoln chose this moment to order a withdrawal.

"The American loss in the battle was 34 killed, 113 wounded and 155 missing. Among the dead was Hugh Jackson, elder brother of future President Andrew Jackson. The British casualties were 26 killed, 93 wounded and 1 missing."

Detail from a 1780 map; Stono Ferry is to the left of Johns Island. This is a detail of the source map, showing the port of Charleston, South Carolina and the coastline to the south as far as Johns Island. It has markings depicting Continental Army defenses set up in anticipation of British attack. The map was probably drawn by British engineers around the time of the 1780 Siege of Charleston.

Skelly's description:

> June 20th. Genl Lincoln with his whole Army (five thousand men) attacked at Stono at eight o'clock this morning. He had six pieces of Cannon. We had not above six hundred men. The Redoubts not strong and the abatis good for nothing. The action lasted an hour and a half. The Rebels repulsed with considerable loss. Reenforcement arriving from John's Island, we followed them into the woods. They retreated, some towards Jacksonborough, some towards Wallace's Bridge. We had four Officers killed and six wounded, and about a hundred and twenty non Commisd and privates killed and wounded.



An example of abatis: an obstacle formed of the branches of trees laid in a row, with the tops directed towards the enemy. Abatis are used to keep the approaching enemy under fire for as long as possible. Note a Redoubt is a small, often temporary defensive fortification.

Later career of Francis Skelly

In 1783 Francis Skelly was promoted to major in the 71st Foot. In 1786 he was transferred from half-pay in the 71st Foot to captain of a company in the 73rd Foot. In 1789 he was promoted to major in the 74th Foot.

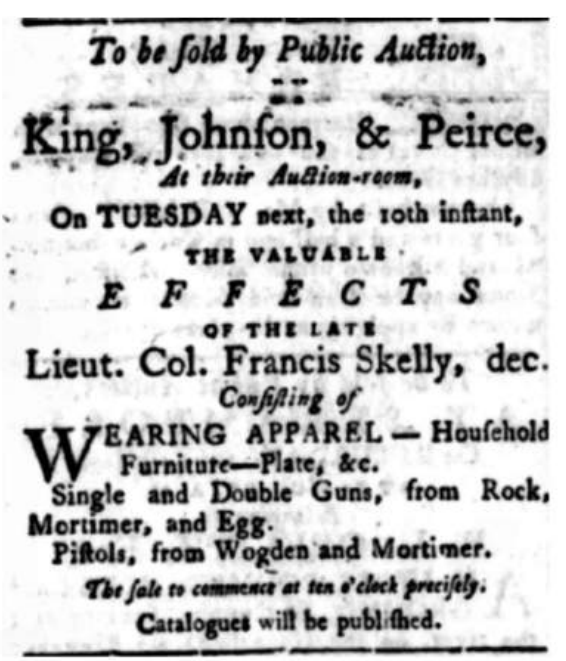
The 74th Foot embarked for India in February 1789 and took part in the siege of Bangalore in February 1791 and the siege of Seringapatam in February 1792 during the Third Anglo-Mysore War.

The National Army Museum has in its collection a Manuscript journal probably of Maj Francis Skelly, 74th (Highland) Regiment of Foot, February – March 1791, dealing with the Siege of Bangalore and 1st Battle of Seringapatam; associated with the 3rd Mysore War (1789-1792).

In March 1791 Charles, Earl Cornwallis, leader of the forces of the British East India Company, wrote a letter about the siege of Bangalore which included praise for the actions of Major Skelly: "He likewise returns his warmest Acknowledgements to Major Skelly, who undertook the Command of the Corps that commenced the Attack of the Breach, and who, by animating them by his own Example, contributed essentially to our important Success." In October 1791 Cornwallis's letter for His Majesty's information again commended Major Skelly ... "having, on that Occasion, led the European Grenadiers and Light Infantry of the Army, and highly contributed, by his own animated Example, to their Success."

In 1792 Major Francis Skelly was promoted to Deputy Quarter Master General to His Majesty's Forces in the East Indies with the Rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the Army.

Francis Skelly died in November 1793 in Fort William (Calcutta), Bengal.



To be ſold by Public Auction,

King, Johnſon, & Peirce,

At their Auction-room,

On TUESDAY next, the 10th inſtant,

THE VALUABLE

E F F E C T S

OF THE LATE

Lieut. Col. Francis Skelly, dec.

Conſiſting of

WEARING APPAREL — Houſehold Furniture—Plate, &c.

Single and Double Guns, from Rock, Mortimer, and Egg.

Piſtols, from Wogden and Mortimer.

The ſale to commence at ten o'clock preciſely.

Catalogues will be publiſhed.

Calcutta Gazette 5 December 1793 page 4

The effects of the late Lieut. Col. Francis Skelly, dec. were advertised for sale on 5 December 1793 in the Calcutta Gazette. These included wearing apparel, household furniture—plate, &c.. Single and Double Guns, from Rock, Mortimer, and Egg, Pistols, from Wogden and Mortimer [well-regarded manufacturers of duelling and officers' pistols].

The news of Francis Skelly's death reached Scotland six months later.

> **Edinburgh Advertiser, 6 May 1794**
> Died at Calcutta, in November last, Lieut.-Colonel Francis Skelly.- It is hoped his friends and relations will accept of this notification of his death. The late Colonel Skelly, was nephew to Lord Adam Gordon, an officer of most distinguished merit, his many amiable qualities rendered him universally esteemed, and must make his death doubly felt by all who knew him.

RELATED POSTS AND FURTHER READING

- Remembering Captain Gordon Skelly, https://anneyoungau.wordpress.com/2021/06/22/remembering-captain-gordon-skelly/

- Skelly, F. "Demonstration Against Charleston, South Carolina, in 1779: Journal of Brigade Major F. Skelly." Edited by Charles C. Jones, Jr. Magazine of American History, 26 (August, November 1891), pp. 152-154, 392-393.

- There is an annotated version of the article at Southern Campaigns of the American Revolution vol 3 no 12.3 Dec 2006 https://southern-campaigns.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/v3n12.pdf from page 24 (annotations by John A. Robertson)

- Keltie, John (1875). A history of the Scottish Highlands, Highland clans and Highland regiments, with an account of the Gaelic language, literature and music by Thomas Maclauchlan, and an essay on Highland scenery. William Mackenzie. from page 481

- Troiani, Don (1998). Troiani's Soldiers in America, 1754–1865. Stackpole. page 43 (requires logging in to archive.org to view)

Article shared from https://anneyoungau.substack.com/p/francis-skelly-a-diarist-during-the

Copyright 2026 Anne Young

- Cannon, R. (1852). Historical record of the seventy-first regiment, Highland light infantry; Containing an account of the formation of the regiment in 1777, and of its subsequent services to 1852. Compiled by Richard Cannon, Esq. adjutant-general's office, horse guards. Illustrated with plates. Retrieved through archive.org

Wikitree: Francis Skelly (1751-1793)

Anne is the 6th great grandniece of Francis

Anne (Champion de Crespigny) Young and Francis Skelly (1751-1793) are both descendants of Elizabeth Betty (Gordon) Skelly (1717-1769).

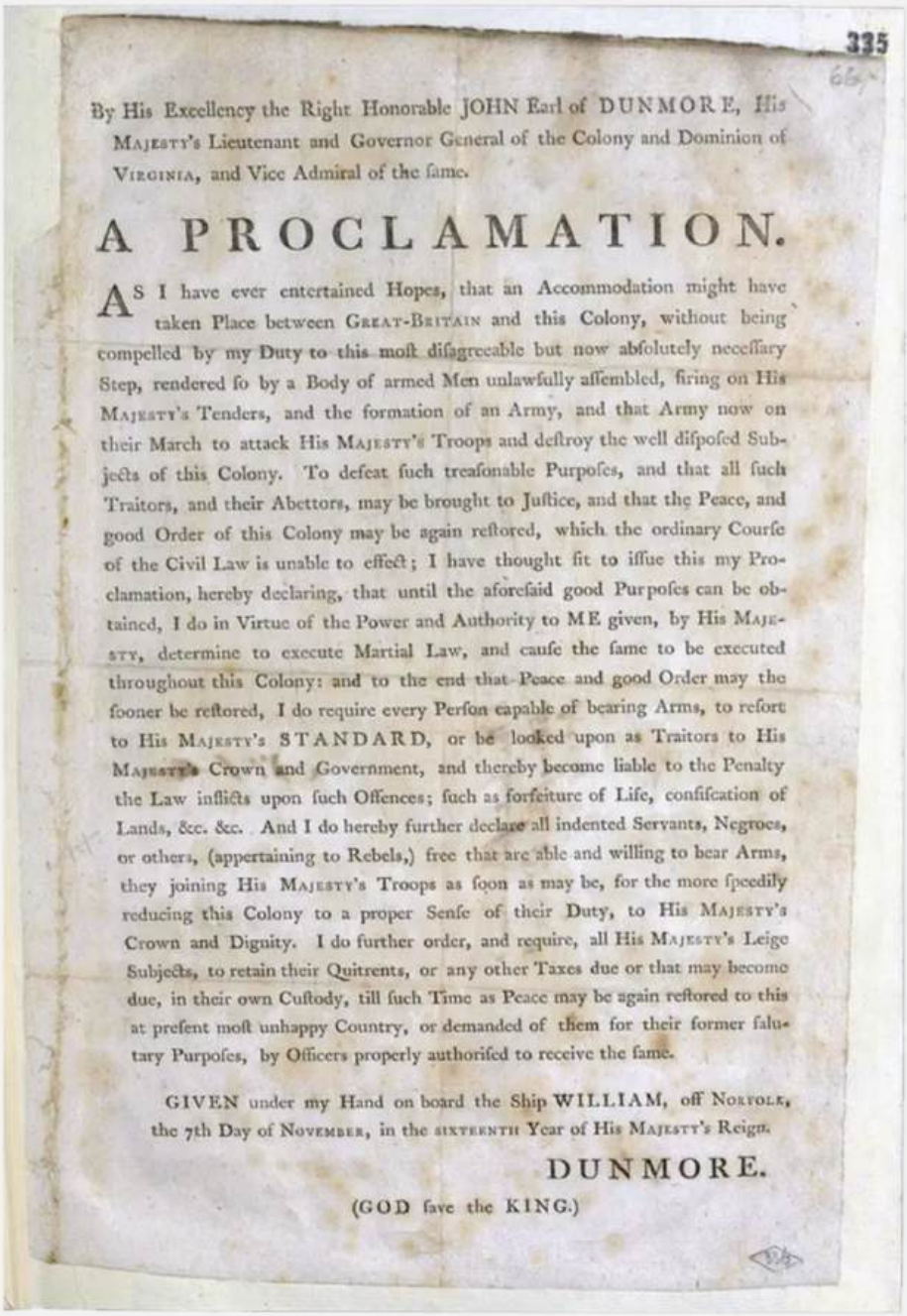
1. Anne is the daughter of Rafe Champion de Crespigny
2. Rafe is the son of Kathleen Cavenagh (Cudmore) Symes (1908-2013)
3. Kathleen is the daughter of Kathleen Mary (Cavenagh) Cudmore (1874-1951)
4. Kathleen is the daughter of Ellen Jane (Mainwaring) Cavenagh-Mainwaring (1845-1920)
5. Ellen is the daughter of Gordon Mainwaring (1817-1872)
6. Gordon is the son of Sophia Henrietta (Duff) Mainwaring (1788-1824)
7. Sophia is the daughter of Dorothy (Skelly) Tobin (1768-1840)
8. Dorothy is the daughter of Gordon Skelly (1741-1771)
9. Gordon is the son of Elizabeth Betty (Gordon) Skelly (1717-1769)

This makes Elizabeth the **seventh great grandmother** of Anne

1. Francis is the son of Elizabeth Betty (Gordon) Skelly (1717-1769)

This makes Elizabeth the **mother** of Francis

The connection is through my Mainwaring and Duff ancestry



335

By His Excellency the Right Honorable JOHN Earl of DUNMORE, His MAJESTY's Lieutenant and Governor General of the Colony and Dominion of VIRGINIA, and Vice Admiral of the ſame.

A PROCLAMATION.

AS I have ever entertained Hopes, that an Accommodation might have taken Place between GREAT-BRITAIN and this Colony, without being compelled by my Duty to this moſt diſagreeable but now abſolutely neceſſary Step, rendered ſo by a Body of armed Men unlawfully aſſembled, firing on His MAJESTY's Tenders, and the formation of an Army, and that Army now on their March to attack His MAJESTY's Troops and deſtroy the well diſpoſed Subjects of this Colony. To defeat ſuch treaſonable Purpoſes, and that all ſuch Traitors, and their Abettors, may be brought to Juſtice, and that the Peace, and good Order of this Colony may be again reſtored, which the ordinary Courſe of the Civil Law is unable to effect; I have thought fit to iſſue this my Proclamation, hereby declaring, that until the aforeſaid good Purpoſes can be obtained, I do in Virtue of the Power and Authority to ME given, by His MAJESTY, determine to execute Martial Law, and cauſe the ſame to be executed throughout this Colony: and to the end that Peace and good Order may the ſooner be reſtored, I do require every Perſon capable of bearing Arms, to reſort to His MAJESTY's STANDARD, or be looked upon as Traitors to His MAJESTY's Crown and Government, and thereby become liable to the Penalty the Law inflicts upon ſuch Offences; ſuch as forfeiture of Life, confiſcation of Lands, &c. &c. And I do hereby further declare all indented Servants, Negroes, or others, (appertaining to Rebels,) free that are able and willing to bear Arms, they joining His MAJESTY's Troops as ſoon as may be, for the more ſpeedily reducing this Colony to a proper Senſe of their Duty, to His MAJESTY's Crown and Dignity. I do further order, and require, all His MAJESTY's Leige Subjects, to retain their Quitrents, or any other Taxes due or that may become due, in their own Cuſtody, till ſuch Time as Peace may be again reſtored to this at preſent moſt unhappy Country, or demanded of them for their former ſalutary Purpoſes, by Officers properly authoriſed to receive the ſame.

GIVEN under my Hand on board the Ship WILLIAM, off NORFOLK, the 7th Day of NOVEMBER, in the SIXTEENTH Year of His MAJESTY's Reign.

DUNMORE.

(GOD ſave the KING.)

The Dunmore Proclamation | It is one long paragraph and is signed in print by 'Dunmore'. Dated 7 November 1775

***Credit**: The National Archives of the UK. Catalogue Reference number CO 5/1353. https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C347850*

1751–1839

THE ORIGINAL GRANTEES OF CAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Deborah blogs from https://YourFamilyQuest.com and her Substack publication of the same name. She also edits the Tips blog for https://MissionGenealogy.org.

SCAN ME

Deborah includes a voiceover for this post. To listen, please visit https://yourfamilyquest.substack.com/p/the-original-grantees-of-campton-b54

SCAN ME

Southmayd married into the Willey family, but that didn't stop them from wrangling in the courts over a road.

When Governor Benning Wentworth granted the Campton charter in 1767, John would have been about sixteen years old. Since he was a minor, someone would have had to pay for him to be one of the original grantees. Unlike seventeen-year-old Abel Willey (see Part Three), John Southmayd didn't immediately go to Campton and arrived about 1773. At this point, he was a wealthy and well-educated man.1

And who authorized payment for him to be one of the original grantees? Probably his stepfather, General Joseph Spencer, whose brother Jared Spencer had originally petitioned the governor of New Hampshire for the grant. (See Part One.) John Southmayd was about five years old when his widowed mother, Hannah Brown, married Spencer. Spencer probably treated the four Southmayd children as his own and went on to have eight more children with Hannah.2

Since John wasn't ready to develop the land when the division started in 1770, he sold his right to the 100 acres in Lot 17 in the first division and 100 acres in Lot 7 in the second division to General Spencer. He also sold his portion of the interval lots to Israel Brainerd. He passed on the opportunity to claim the 100 acres in Lot 35 of the third division, but chose to buy the right to 100 acres in Lot 42 of the third division from Peter Spencer, and he pitched his own right to 75 acres in Lot 16 of the 4th division.3

The now 22-year-old John Southmayd probably made arrangements in Connecticut with Peter Spencer to buy Lot 42 when the division was done. And he most likely started working the land as soon as he arrived in 1773. He also probably started courting Abel Willey's youngest sister, Prudence, soon after his arrival. They were married on 2 June 1774, the day after the first minister, Rev. Selden Church, arrived in the town.4

It was a short marriage. Prudence gave birth to a daughter they named Prudence, in 1776, and in the following year, Prudence (Willey) Southmayd died. It is not clear when in 1777, John's wife died, but John may have been away from home. He was serving with others from Campton in "Captain Willoughby's company of Volunteers in Col. Chase's Regiment, Commanded by Brigdr. Genl. Whipple, which Company marched from Plymouth and the Towns Adjacent in Sept 1777 to the Assitance of our Northern Army under the command of Major General Gates."5

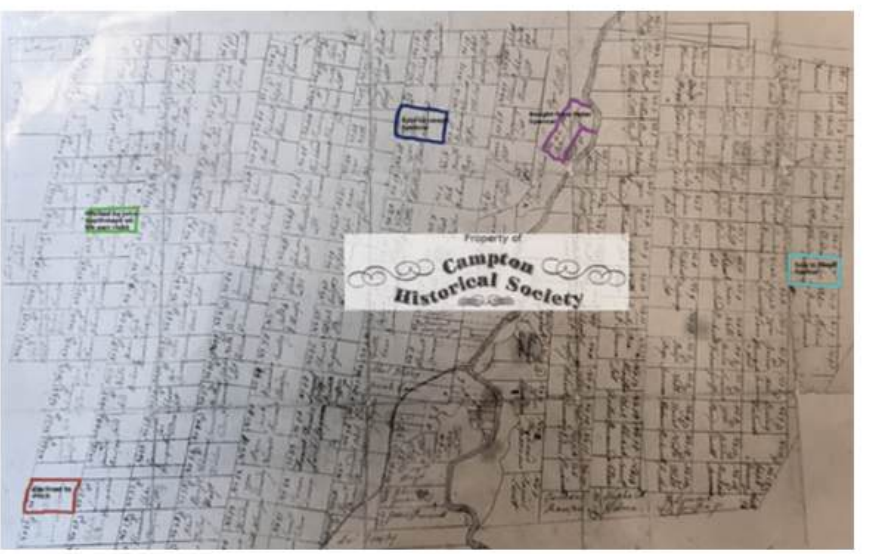
John married Ruth Baker in 1779. Prudence was probably cared for by her maternal relatives while John was serving in the war. Three-year-old Prudence had most likely been with the Willey family for a year and a half. Newlywed, sixteen-year-old Ruth may not have been ready to mother a young child, especially one who would not understand why she couldn't live with the only family she probably remembered. Often, children in this situation would be left with the caretaker relatives.6

Pemigewasset Valley and Franconia Mountains from West Campton, New Hampshire, photo (Detroit Publishing Company: Between 1900 and 1910); Library of Congress.

The Willey and Southmayd families crossed paths often in the small town. They served together in various capacities for the town government. They most likely attended the only church in town together.

> *The Petition of John Southmayd, Abel Willey and Edmund March Select men of Campton in County Grafton, humbly sheweth that there are a number of rapid streams in said Campton which require expensive bridges.*
>
> *That by reason of great floods, the town of Campton has sustained considerble losses in the distruction of bridges, and by a necessary removal of roads to a greater distance from the river which runs through the town.*
>
> *That this has necessitated the assessment of very heavy taxes on the Polls & other rateable estate, merely to make the roads passable,—and that it is still necessary that there should be considerable more expended in order to make the roads in said Campton in any measure conveniet for passing.*
>
> *We therefore pray your Honors to take our case under your consideration & if it may consist with your wisdom grant us permission to assess all the unimproved lands which are laid out in said Campton, one penny per acre yearly for two years to be expended in making & repairing roads in said town.*
>
> *And we shall as in duty bound every pray &c*
> *Campton January 14th 17917*

Sadly, it seems a road caused bad feelings between John Southmayd and the Willey family.



John Southmayd bought Peter Spencer's right to the pink lot and made it his home farm. John bought the green lot on his own right, but he sold his rights to the blue lots to Joseph Spencer Sr. and passed on his rights to the red lot.

According to Darius Willey's children, "the road to his new farm necessarily crossed the land of John Southmayd, Esq., who strenuously resisted it being opened, although it was legally established." (See the pink outlined lot on the above map.)8

Darius was Mary Willey's son, but John Southmayd did not let family feelings rule. He originally filed a complaint in 1812, but it wasn't against Darius; it was against his brother, Isaac. However, since neither party showed up after three opportunities, the case was dismissed.9

John Southmayd again filed a complaint accusing Isaac Willey, Jacob Giddings, and Gilbert Stevens of "with force and arms entered in and upon the Plantiff's close[?]...the same being part of the Plantiff's farm...and then and there the said Isaac, Jacob, and Gilbert with force and aforesaid brake down and took a gate the property of the Plantiff...and laid the Plantiffs close open where was grain and grass growing, that oxen, horses, swine, and sheep might enter therein, and the same said grain and grass distroyed..." The court found the defendants not guilty and ordered Southmayd to pay costs taxed fifty-five dollars and eleven cents.10

Still, Darius' children blamed John Southmayd's actions for their family's struggles.

> *A law suit followed for several years, but father finally got his case. It cost him, however, a great amount of time and vexation, and not a little money. It was a heavy drawback to father's interest, from which he never fully recovered. But for this he would have attained to easy circumstances.11*

Darius Willey was sued by John Southmayd for a debt in 1812, and the court ordered Darius Willey to pay $12.67 (worth about $307.75 in 2025). The judgment was overturned on appeal when John failed to appear in court after being summoned three times. John was ordered to pay $16.85 to cover Darius's costs and taxes.12

And yet the families still interacted. Louisa Southmayd, John's granddaughter, was by the side of Darius Willey's wife when she passed away.13

Community was important to John. In 1800, together with Moses Baker, Samuel Holmes, and others, he petitioned the State to allow them to create a corporation called the Proprietors of the Social Library in Campton. He also worked with Jonathan Burbank, Oliver Barron, Timothy Chase, Otis Winter, and others to form the First Baptist Society in Campton in March 1828.14

Did this cause contention in his household? After Rev. Church left Campton around 1792, the community was without a clergyman for

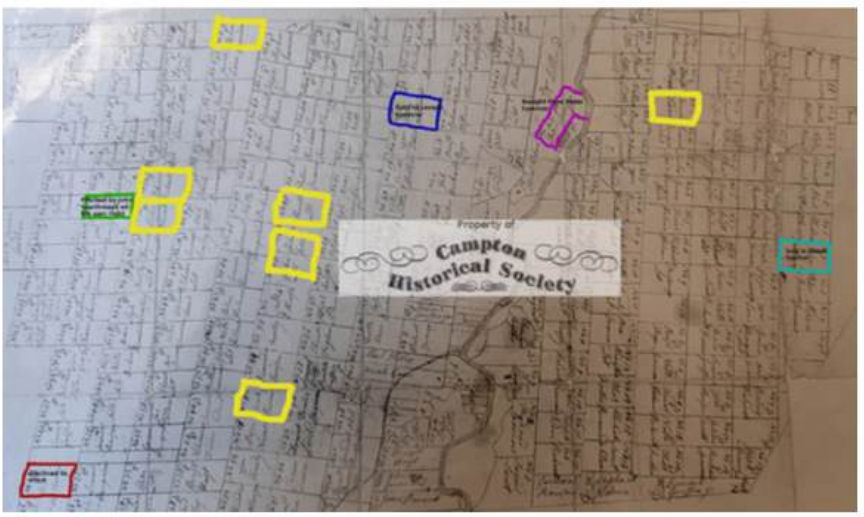
several years. The residents on the west side of the Pemigewasset River attended church in neighboring Plymouth. The residents on John Southmayd's side decided to build a church south of David Bartlett's land and "in front of the old burying ground." It was completed in 1802, and John's wife, Ruth, and her uncle, Deacon Moses Baker, who passed away that same year, were part of the twenty-member congregation. They were led by Rev. Peletiah Chapin.15

Campton Baptist Church, built in 1826; Town of Campton, New Hampshire & Google Maps.

In 1805, Rev. Chapin "avowed his dissent from the Congregational church, and united with a Baptist church in a neighboring town. About one third of the church gradually came into sympathy with him." Some of these members claimed to own a portion of the church building, and the two congregations worked around each other until the Congregational members bought "the portion of the house owned by the Baptist people."16

Even though Ruth's father had been a deacon in the church almost from the time he arrived in Campton around 1777, perhaps he and Ruth were as eager to unite with the Baptists as John Southmayd.17

When John Southmayd arrived in Campton, he was a wealthy man. He seems to have done well in Campton buying several plots of land, including Lot 12 in the third division for $700, part of Lot 48 in the first division and part of the Glebe lot in the first division for $1,200, and Lot 8 (Lot 13 on the map) in the third division from Joseph Spencer of Vienna, Wood, Virginia. (See Part Two for Joseph Spencer Jr.'s story.)18



Some of the land John Southmayd bought after the divisions by the original proprietors are outlined in yellow.

But he must have disposed of his assets before his death. In 1836, about three years before his death, he had $350 lent out and no animals. However, he was paying highway, town, school, state, county, and road taxes at about the same rate as his neighbors with similar valuations. In 1929, he had 2 oxen over four years old, 4 cows younger than two years, 3 two year old cows, and 2 three year old cows, 2 horses younger than two years, 3 two year old horses, 2 three year old horses, 1 four year old horse, 11 hay, no orchards, 16 pastures, 188 acres undevoloped land, $100 worth of buildings, and no money lent out.19

FOOTNOTES

1. *Waterbury, New Haven, Connecticut, Vital Records, Births, Marriages, Deaths, vol. 1, 586, Family of Daniel Southmayd and Hannah Brown; FamilySearch, this is a copy of the First Book of Records for Waterbury. Also, New Hampshire Index to Births, Early to 1900, card for John Southmayd, 8 August 1751, Waterbury, Connecticut; FamilySearch. And, Book of Biographies, The Volume Contains Biographical Sketches of Leading Citizens of Grafton County, New Hampshire (Buffalo, New York: Biographical Publishing Company, 1897), 294; HathiTrust.*

2. *Meliscent's gravestone indicates she was born around 1757 and was the daughter of Gen. Joseph Spencer. As an upstanding member of the East Haddam society, Joseph would have married Hannah (Brown) Southmayd before they had a child. While nothing was found that said Hannah was (Brown) Southmayd, the land deals between John Southmayd and Peter Spencer, Gen. Joseph Spencer, and Joseph Spencer show there was a connection, and that is likely that the wife Hannah mentioned in Gen. Joseph's will was John Southmayd's mother, Hannah Brown. See, Find A Grave, database with images, memorial 40896895, Meliscent Spencer Parsons (unk-1832), memorial created by Irma, with gravestone image by David Malloy; First Church Cemetery, East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut. Also, New Hampshire Index to Births, Early to 1900, card for John Southmayd, 8 August 1751, Waterbury, Connecticut; FamilySearch. And, Colchester, New London, Connecticut, Probate Records, Vol. 5, 1780-1790, 504, Will of Joseph Spencer of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut, 30 January 1788; FamilySearch.*

3. *Campton Town Records Vol. 1, 1767-1826, 29, lot 17 in the first division on the East side of the Pemegiwasett River & 84–85, lot 7 in the second divison in the seventh tier & 245, two 13-acre lots of intervale land & 293, lot 35 in the third division & 297–298, lot 42 in the third division & 344–345, lot 16 in the fourth division; FamilySearch.*

4. *Rev. Isaac Willey, "The Early History of Campton," in Proceedings at the Centennial Celebration of the Town of Campton, New Hampshire 12 September 1867 (Concord, New Hampshire: A. G. Jones, Printer, 1868), 29; FamilySearch. Also, Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records & Vital 1777–1825, marriage of John Southmayd and Prudence, his wife, 2 June 1774; FamilySearch. And, New Hampshire Index to Marriages, Early to 1900, card for John Southmayd and Prudence Willey, 2 June 1774; FamilySearch.*

5. *Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records & Vital 1777–1825, birth of Prudence Southmayd, 27 September 1776; FamilySearch. Also, New Hampshire Index to Births, Early to 1900, card for Prudence Southmayd, 27 September 1776; FamilySearch. Her mother is listed as Prudence Willey. And, New Hampshire Index to Deaths, Early to 1900, card for Prudence Southmayd, 1777; FamilySearch. And, Ezra S. Stearns, A.M., History of Plymouth New Hampshire, vol. 1 Narrative (Cambridge, Massachusetts: University Press, 1906), 116; Highlander View of History, Documents > Family Docs.*

6. *Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records & Vital 1777–1825, marriage of John Southmayd and Ruth, his wife, 26 August 1779; FamilySearch. Also, New Hampshire Index to Marriages, Early to 1900, card for John Southmayd and Ruth Baker, 26 August 1779; FamilySearch. There is no evidence that Prudence stayed with the Willey family at any time. Her Uncle Able was not married, but her Aunt Mary, who was married to Darius Willey, had six children, and Prudence was three years younger than Mary's last known child.*

7. *Isaac W. Hammond, Town Papers: Documents Relating to Towns in New Hampshire, "A" to "F" Inclusive (Concord, New Hampshire: Parsons B. Cogswell, State Printer, 1882), 251–252; GoogleBooks.*

8. *Family Memorial of Darius Willey and Wife With Their Children, August 15th, 1865 (San Francisco, California: Bacon & Company, 1868), 32; FamilySearch.*

9. *New Hampshire Index to Births, Early to 1900, card for Darius Willey Jr., son of Darius Willey and Mary Willey, 15 August 1765; FamilySearch. Also, New Hampshire Index to Deaths, Early to 1900, card for Isaac Willey, son of Darius Willey and Mary Willey, 25 June 1851; FamilySearch. And, Grafton County, New Hampshire, Superior Court of Judicature, vol. 9, 1812–1816, 397, John Southmayd vs. Isaac Willey case dismissed, 7 November 1812; FamilySearch.*

10. *Grafton County, New Hampshire, Superior Court Judgments, book 5, 1813–1814, 267–268, John Southmayd vs. Isaac Willey Jr. and Jacob Giddings; FamilySearch.*

11. *Family Memorial of Darius Willey and Wife With Their Children, August 15th, 1865 (San Francisco, California: Bacon & Company, 1868), 32; FamilySearch.*

12. Grafton County, New Hampshire, Superior Court Judgements, book 6, 1814–1815, 36, no. 15, John Southmayd vs. Darius Willey in a plea of debt; FamilySearch. Also, CPI Inflation Calculator.

13. Family Memorial of Darius Willey and Wife With Their Children, August 15th, 1865 (San Francisco, California: Bacon & Company, 1868), 60; FamilySearch.

14. Laws of New Hampshire Including Public and Private Acts, Resolves, Votes, Etc., vol. 6, Second Constitutional Period, 1792–1801 (Concord, New Hampshire: Evans Printing Co., 1917), 645, An Act to Incorporate Certain Persons by the Name of the Proprietors of the Social Library in Campton; GoogleBooks. Also, "Notice," Statesman and Register (Concord, New Hampshire), Saturday, 29 March 1828, p. 3, col. 5; Library of Congress, announcement that John Southmayd and others formed the First Baptist Society in Campton.

15. Rev. Isaac Willey, "The Early History of Campton," in Proceedings at the Centennial Celebration of the Town of Campton, New Hampshire 12 September 1867 (Concord, New Hampshire: A. G. Jones, Printer, 1868), 43-44; FamilySearch.

16. Rev. Isaac Willey, "The Early History of Campton," in Proceedings at the Centennial Celebration of the Town of Campton, New Hampshire 12 September 1867 (Concord, New Hampshire: A. G. Jones, Printer, 1868), 44; FamilySearch.

17. Rev. Isaac Willey, "The Early History of Campton," in Proceedings at the Centennial Celebration of the Town of Campton, New Hampshire 12 September 1867 (Concord, New Hampshire: A. G. Jones, Printer, 1868), 40; FamilySearch.

18. Grafton County, New Hampshire, Deeds, vol. 40, 1805, 158 Joseph Spencer of Vienna, Wood, Virginia sells John Southmayd Lot 8 in the third divison belonging to the original right of Job Beckwith, 13 January 1802 & 160, Ezekiel Elliot of Thornton sells John Southmayd of Campton Lot 12 in the third division belonging to the original right of Moses Nowel, 5 November 1814; FamilySearch. Also, Grafton County, New Hampshire, Deeds, vol. 97, 1825–1826, 370–371, Daniel Percival of Campton sells John Southmayd of Campton part of Lot 48 and part of a Glebe lot adjacent to Lot 47, 25 May 1816; FamilySearch.

19. Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records & Vital, 1777–1825, Invoice & Taxes for 1836, John Southmayd & Invoice & Taxes for 1829, John Southmayd; FamilySearch.

Article shared from https://yourfamilyquest.substack.com/p/the-original-grantees-of-campton-b54

Copyright 2026 Deborah Car.

Sharing my family history. I am Australian with forebears from the United Kingdom and Europe. Anne blogs from https://anneyoungau.wordpress.com and https://anneyoungau.substack.com

SCAN ME

1751–1777

JOHN STOCKING CHAUNCY

Cruelly killed by the British

John Stocking Chauncy (1751-1777), my third cousin seven times removed, fought against the British in the American War of Independence. He was killed, a prisoner of war, after he had surrendered.

John Chauncy was born on 21 August 1751 in Middletown, Middlesex, Connecticut Colony, the eldest of six children of Nathaniel Chauncey and Mary Easton.

He enlisted on 22 March 1777 with the First Troop of Colonel Sheldon's Light Dragoons. His enlistment record notes that he was a farmer from Middletown, 5 feet ten inches tall, dark complexioned, with brown eyes and brown hair.

At the time dragoons were mounted infantry with horses for mobility. They fought on foot, dismounted.

View from the British positions at the Battle of White Marsh. By cartographer Johann Martin Will (1777)

The 2nd Continental Light Dragoons, also known as Sheldon's Horse after Colonel Elisha Sheldon, was commissioned by the Continental

Congress on 12 December 1776. It was first mustered at Wethersfield, Connecticut, in March 1777 for service with the Continental Army. The regiment consisted of four troops from Connecticut, one troop each, largely from Massachusetts and New Jersey, and two companies of light infantry.

The regiment saw action at the battles of Woodbridge, Brandywine, Kingston, Schoharie, Flocky, Paoli, White Marsh, Morrisania, Saratoga, Germantown, and Yorktown.

John Chauncy's unit was engaged in the Battle of White Marsh on 5 to 8 December 1777. John appears to have been captured in a skirmish that followed the main battle.

He died on 14 December 1777, aged 26, killed, it was reported, after he had surrendered himself as a prisoner, near the Schuylkill River below Philadelphia near Germantown. Isaac Brown, who served with the same troop, was killed in the same incident.

The death of John Chauncy and Isaac Brown was reported in the Hartford Courant of 20 January 1778:

> *"On the night of the 14th of December by order of His Excellency General Washington, I took post with a detachment of my troop, consisting of about twenty men, officers included, near Vandeering's mills on the ridge rode running by the Schuylkill to Philadelphia, with a view of observing the motion of the enemy ; the army having crossed the Schuylkill at Sweeds-ford. Notwithstanding we changed quarters every night, at late hours, the enemy got intelligence of our stength and situation, and by the help of some infernal tory, were conducted in a bye road till they had marched near a mile in our rear, by this route avoiding our sentinels and patroles, which were posted on all the main roads leading to Philadelphia ; to make my post secure, as guarded on all sides, I ordered a vidett near half a mile in our rear, who at about two o'clock in the morning came in with an account, that a huge body of horse was moving fast down the road directly in our rear. I ordered the men immediately to mount, (the horses being kept constantly sadled and the men accoutred) and before all could parade in the road they began to fire upon us. We exhanged a few shot, but finding it impossible with about ten men to oppose an hundred, (as I am informed by those who counted them as they passed this is a moderate computation) we moved off as fast as possible. They immediately surrounded the house and barn, pursuing us not far, and took five prisoners, while attempting to escape; whose names for the satisfaction of any concerned, are Quartermaster Samuel Mills, Isaac Brown, John Chauncey, Ephraim Kirby, and Naboth Lewis. After they were brought in, being taken in the field, they were first disarmed, and plundered of their spurs, watches, &c. &c. and then ordered by the officers to be killed, notwithstanding the entreaties and prayers of the unfortunate prisoners for*

> *mercy, the soldiers fell upon them (the officers setting the example,) and after cutting, hacking, and stabbing them till they supposed they were dead, they left them (Brown excepted, whom after most cruelly mangling they shot) , setting fire to the barn to consume any one who might be in it. Mr. Mills, after being wounded in several places in the head, had his life spared and is now a prisoner. Brown, and Chauncy, are dead. Kirby, and Lewis, have been properly taken care of and I trust will recover."*

On 16 December 1777 Major Benjamin Tallmadge wrote to General Washington with an account of the incident in which he described the "cruelty of the British". In addition the British major John André described this engagement in his journal entry for 15 December: "Lord Cathcart with forty Dragoons surprised a troop of the Rebel Cavalry, and killed or took prisoners several of them"

John Chauncey's name is recorded on a memorial in the Old Cemetery, Durham, Middlesex, in Connecticut. Transcribed it reads:

> *JOHN STOCKING CHAUNCEY, b. Aug. 21, 1751,*
> *A light Horseman in the American Army, he was killed by British Cavalry, near the Schuylkill [River] below Philadelphia after he had surrendered himself a Prisoner.*

Chauncy had made his will on 13 August 1776, shortly before going into the Army of the United States. It was proven on 6 April 1778. Chauncy's sisters Abigail Chauncy and Mary Johnson were his legatees.

During the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783), prisoners of war were treated very differently from those of more recent wars. The Geneva Conventions of 1864 and later govern the treatment of prisoners of war. Its signatories bind themselves to care for captives:

"Prisoners of war must at all times be humanely treated. Any unlawful act or omission by the Detaining Power causing death or seriously endangering the health of a prisoner of war in its custody is prohibited, and will be regarded as a serious breach of the present Convention."

(It is worth noting that in the 18th century care and supplies for captives were expected to be provided by their own combatants or private resources.)

In 1775 the British had declared American soldiers were traitors, and this denied them the staus of prisoner-of-war. However, British strategy in the early conflict included pursuit of a negotiated

settlement, and so officials declined to try or hang them, the usual procedure for treason, to avoid unnecessarily risking any public sympathy the British might still enjoy. An estimated 20,000 Americans were held as prisoner during the war. Conditions for prisoners held by the British were poor and resulted in starvation and disease. The neglect of the prisoners meant that almost half died in captivity. More Americans died of neglect in imprisonment than were killed in battle.

John Stocking Chauncy was one of 25,000 American Patriots who died during active military service against the British. Of these, approximately 6,800 were killed in battle, while at least 17,000 died from disease, most as prisoners of war.

Article shared from https://anneyoungau.substack.com/p/john-stocking-chauncy-1751-1777-cruelly

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Anne Young

FURTHER READING

- Hartford Courant, 20 January 1778, Page 3. via Newspapers.com (https://www.newspapers.com/article/hartford-courant-capture-of-samuel-mills/180303295/)

- "Major Benjamin Tallmadge to George Washington, 16 December 1777," Founders Online, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-12-02-0565. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 12, 26 October 1777 – 25 December 1777, ed. Frank E. Grizzard, Jr. and David R. Hoth. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002, pp. 618–619.]

Wikitree:

- John Stocking Chauncy (1751-1777)

John and Anne are third cousins 7 times removed

John Stocking Chauncy (1751-1777) and Anne (Champion de Crespigny) Young are both descendants of Catherine (Eyre) Chauncey (abt.1603-1668).

1. John is the son of Nathaniel Chauncey (1720-1798)
2. Nathaniel is the son of Nathaniel Chauncey (1681-1756)
3. Nathaniel is the son of Nathaniel Chauncey (1639-1685)
4. Nathaniel is the son of Catherine (Eyre) Chauncey (abt.1603-1668)

This makes Catherine the **second great grandmother** of John

1. Anne is the daughter of Rafe Champion de Crespigny
2. Rafe is the son of Richard Geoffrey Champion de Crespigny OBE (1907-1966)
3. Richard is the son of Constantine Trent Champion de Crespigny (1882-1952)
4. Constantine is the son of Annie Frances (Chauncy) Champion Crespigny (1857-1883)
5. Annie is the daughter of Philip Lamothe Snell Chauncy (1816-1880)
6. Philip is the son of William Snell (Brown) Chauncy (1781-1845)
7. William is the son of William (Snell) Snell-Chauncy (1756-1829)
8. William is the son of Martha (Chauncy) Snell (1719-1765)
9. Martha is the daughter of Charles Chauncy (1673-1763)
10. Charles is the son of Ichabod Chauncy (1635-1691)
11. Ichabod is the son of Catherine (Eyre) Chauncey (abt.1603-1668)

This makes Catherine the **ninth great grandmother** of Anne

- Lieutenant Samuel Mills (1745-1814)
- Private Isaac Brown (-1777)
- Private Ephraim Kirby (1757-1804)
- Private Naboth Lewis (1756-1833)
- Major Benjamin Tallmadge (1754-1835)
- John André (1750-1780)
- Lord Cathcart, then a Lieutenant with the Seventeenth Regiment of (Light) Dragoons, William Schaw (Cathcart) Cathcart 1st Earl Cathcart KT PC (1755-1843)

BILL MOORE

1751–1835

JOSHUA NAYLOR

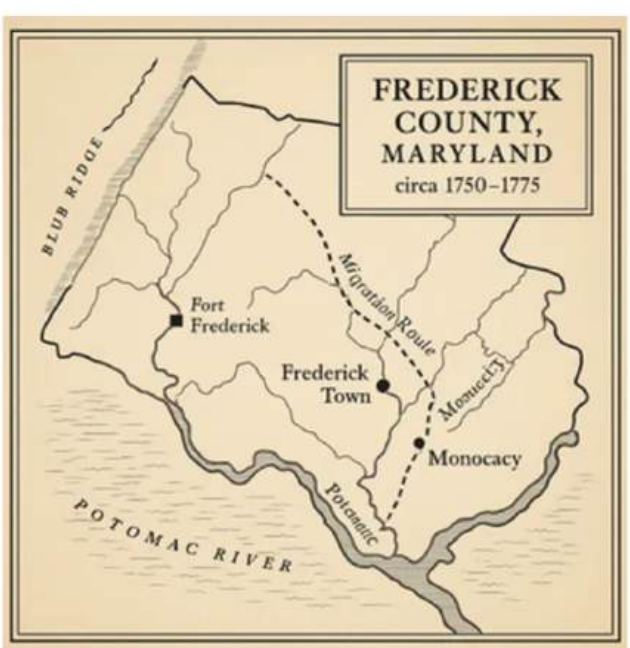
A Stories250 Revolutionary War Ancestor's Story

Bill blogs from both his Substack publication at https://BillMooreNY.substack.com and his https://WeAre Archive. The QR code takes you to his Substack profile which includes both sites.

SCAN ME

Joshua Naylor (sometimes spelled Nailor) is my 5th great-grandfather on my maternal-paternal side. His Revolutionary War service includes some of the most pivotal fights in the entire war.

Joshua was born in December 1751 in Frederick County, Maryland, the son of George Joshua Naylor and Margaret A. Wimsatt (later Woodward).1 He was born at a pivotal time in American history. Maryland was both a prosperous colony and a contested frontier, exposed to raids during the French and Indian War. Over time, residents of the state became disillusioned with British rule. In 1765, when Joshua was 14 years of age, Maryland was one of the first colonies to repudiate the Stamp Act. In fact, a group of 12 judges in Frederick County, Joshua's home county, led the repudiation of the act.2

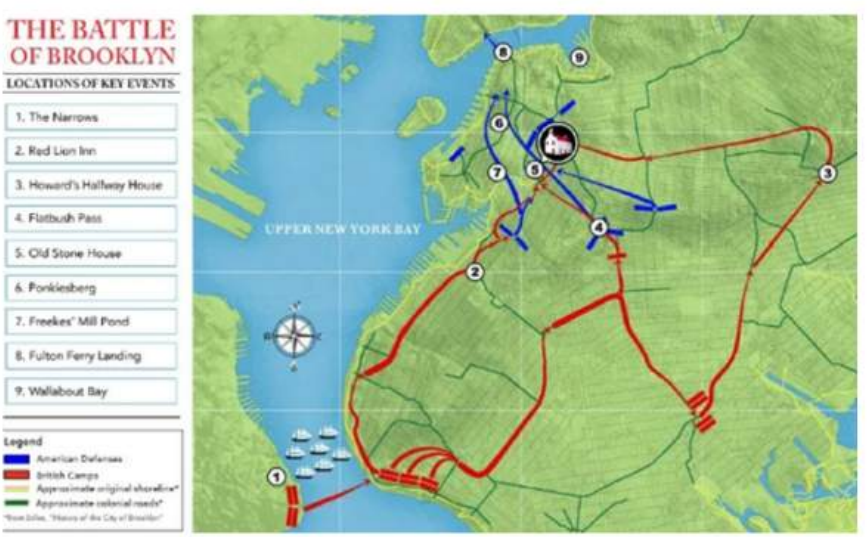


Frederick County, MD, circa 1750-1775. Map created using ChatGPT

As Joshua grew into manhood, revolutionary fervor grew steadily. On 10 February 1776, at the age of 24, Joshua enlisted as a private in the 7th Company of the First Maryland Regiment.3 His service would place him in some of the most crucial campaigns of the Revolutionary War.

Joshua's regiment gained lasting renown at the Battle of Brooklyn (Long Island), 27 August 1776. Vastly outnumbered by British and Hessian forces, the Marylanders launched repeated counterattacks, sacrificing themselves to protect the Continental Army's retreat. Of roughly 260 men who charged, more than two-thirds were killed or captured. Washington later praised their valor, stating, "Good God! What brave fellows I must this day lose!" History remembers them as the "Maryland 400."4 Joshua was present for this defining moment, and though his individual role is not detailed, his service links him to this legendary stand.

During the Battle of Brooklyn, the First Maryland Regiment lost approximately one third of their total troop strength. Casualties were substantially higher in the Third, Fourth, Sixth, Seventh Independent, and Ninth Companies who were forced to make a last stand at Old Stone House. Some of these companies lost over eighty percent of their men.5



Map showing troop locations during the Battle of Brooklyn. Map ©Maryland State Archives (https://msamaryland400.com/battle-of-brooklyn-map1/)

After the Battle of Brooklyn, the Maryland soldiers regrouped and marched North on Manhattan Island. Joshua's regiment fought at Harlem Heights (16 September 1776), a small but morale-restoring skirmish where the Americans repelled the British in northern Manhattan.6 He was also at the Battle of White Plains (28 October 1776), where Washington's forces endured another retreat but survived to fight on.7

In December, the Maryland troops joined Washington in the audacious crossing of the Delaware River (25–26 December 1776). Despite bitter cold and icy waters, the army crossed successfully and defeated the Hessian garrison at Trenton the next morning.8 Days later, at Princeton (3 January 1777), they secured another victory.9 These twin successes revived the Revolution at its lowest ebb.

Washington Crossing the Delaware, by Emanuel Leutze, 1851, Metropolitan Museum

After four years of service, Joshua was discharged from the 4th Maryland Regiment on 20 May 1780.10 He had survived the Revolution's darkest days and participated in its most iconic campaigns.

Joshua married Martha Nutwell in Prince George's County, Maryland, on 17 January 1780.11 Their first known child, John Naylor, was born on 20 December 1786 near Georgetown, Maryland.12

Martha died sometime after 1790. Census records from that period indicate Joshua lived in Prince George's County, Maryland, with four males under the age or 15 and one female of indeterminate age, assumed to be Martha, but by 1792 he was a widower.13

On 11 June 1792, Joshua remarried. His second wife, Morning Stoggins, bore him several children as they established their family in Montgomery County, North Carolina.14

Their known children include:

- John Naylor (1786–1855), son of Martha Nutwell
- George Naylor (1801-1881)
- Wade Hampton Naylor (1807-1857)

- Nancy A. Naylor (1810-?)
- Jamima Naylor (1811-)
- Joshua Naylor, Jr. (1813-1868)
- Leonard Naylor (1817-1850)

Joshua's move to North Carolina reflected larger post-Revolution migration patterns. Veterans and their families often sought new opportunities in the South and West. North Carolina's Piedmont was attractive for its fertile land, available through grants and bounty land warrants. Several members of Joshua's extended family made the same migration including his cousin, Batson Naylor who settled in nearby Rowan County.15

Migration southward from Maryland and Virginia followed the Great Wagon Road, which stretched from Pennsylvania through the Shenandoah Valley into the Carolinas. Families like the Naylors traveled this route in search of farmland, community, and religious fellowship, often joining growing Methodist and Baptist congregations in their new homes.16

Joshua's life after the Revolution was shaped by his status as a veteran. Many veterans faced economic struggles, as pensions were inconsistent and often delayed. In 1822, Joshua was awarded a pension for his Revolutionary War service.17 These grants provided some support in old age and recognized his contributions to independence.

Veterans like Joshua often became community pillars. They carried the memory of sacrifice and helped knit together the new nation's civic and religious life. While some lived in poverty, the shared identity of service remained a point of pride.

Joshua lived to the remarkable age of 83, dying on 24 June 1835 in Montgomery County, North Carolina. He was buried at Lane Chapel Methodist Cemetery near New London, Montgomery County.18

His life trajectory reflects the experiences of his generation: originating as a British colonial subject, shaped by participation in the independence movement, and subsequently becoming a pioneer in new territories. His children and grandchildren carried the Naylor name into the 19th century and beyond, extending his legacy in the South.

Gravestone of Joshua Naylor at Lanes Chapel Church Cemetery, Montgomery County, NC. Photo by S. Cato (Find a Grave Contributor #48455312) https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/62066192/joshua-naylor/photo

Joshua Naylor's story is one of resilience and renewal. From the desperate stand of the Maryland 400 to the bitter cold of Valley Forge, and from the promise of new land in North Carolina to the peace of his final years, his life traced the trajectory of the early United States.

He embodied the Revolution's promise: an ordinary man who, through service and sacrifice, helped secure liberty for generations to come.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Most genealogies of Joshua Naylor point to George Joshua Naylor and Margaret Woodward as his parents. One profile, from the Archives of Maryland biographical series, lists his parents as Samuel and Mary Naylor. It does not provide any documentation to back up that assertion.*

2. *Gaines, Danielle E., "Stamp repudiation left its mark on Frederick, country," The Frederick [Maryland] News-Post, 14 November 2015, (https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/politics_and_government/stamp-repudiation-left-its-mark-on-frederick-country/article_127bd1a4-39fe-5c6f-b520-cf772759cd94.html).*

3. *Revolutionary War Military Records, Maryland Archives, enlistment roll, 10 February 1776, 7th Company, First Maryland Regiment.*

4. *"Read the Revolution, Washington's Immortals," Museum of the American Revolution: 31 August 2016; review of Washington's Immortals, by Patrick O'Donnell, (https://www.amrevmuseum.org/read-the-revolution/washington-s-immortals).*

5. *Tacyn, Mark Andrew, "' To the End:' The First Maryland Regiment and the American Revolution" (PhD diss., University of Maryland College Park, 1999), abstract.*

6. *Schenawolf, Harry, "Battle of Harlem Heights Sept. 16, 1776: Americans Gave the British a Good Drubbing," Revolutionary War Journal: 15 January 2014, (https://revolutionarywarjournal.com/battle-of-harlem-heights/).*

7. *"The Battle of White Plains," Finding the Maryland 400, Maryland State Archives: 28 October 2013, (https://msamaryland400.com/2013/10/28/the-battle-of-white-plains/).*

8. *"The Crossing and the Capture," Finding the Maryland 400, Maryland State Archives: 26 December 2013, (https://msamaryland400.com/2013/12/26/the-crossing-and-the-capture/).*

9. *"A Fine Fox Chase: The Battle of Princeton," Finding the Maryland 400, Maryland State Archives: 3 January 2014, (https://msamaryland400.com/2014/01/03/a-fine-fox-chase-the-battle-of-princeton/).*

10. *Joshua Nailor (Pvt., Maryland Line, 4th Regiment, Col. Hall's Company, U.S. Revolutionary War), pension no. S. 41,914; Case Files of Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Applications Based on Revolutionary War Service, compiled ca. 1800 - ca. 1912, documenting the period ca. 1775 - ca. 1900; U.S. Revolutionary War Pension Files; Record Group 15: National Archives, Washington, D.C. imaged: Fold3, (https://www.fold3.com/image/25085915/nailor-joshua-page-6-us-revolutionary-war-pensions-1800-1900), accessed 20 September, 2025.*

11. *Maryland Records Colonial, Revolutionary, County and Church from Original Sources Marriage Licenses Issued at Upper Marlborough, Prince George's County, Maryland--1777 to 1801.* Maryland Records Colonial, Revolutionary, County and Church from Original Sources Marriage Licenses Issued at Upper Marlborough, Prince George's County, Maryland--1777 to 1801.* Name: Joshua Naylor Spouse: Martha Nutwell Marriage Date: 17 Jan 1781.*

12. *"1850 Census": "United States, Census, 1850," database with images, (FamilySearch Record|MCDQ-PZ3): accessed 21 September 2025 FamilySearch Image S3HY-DC6Q-LWP "John Nailer (63) in Bedford, Bedford, Tennessee, United States. Born in Maryland." citing Affiliate Name: The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Affiliate Publication Number: M432; Line: 10; Digital film/folder number: 004191095_002_M9C4-YBF; FHL microfilm: 24560; Image number: 87; Record number: 10226; Packet letter: A; Indexing batch: N01133-0. [John's birth date seems to be family lore. I have not been able to confirm it, other than the probable year based on census records.]*

13. *Martha Nutwell Naylor's death date is estimated based on a female of her age appearing in the household on the 1790 Census and Joshua's apparent marriage to Morning Stoggins Harril in 1792, although that date is questionable, see note 14.*

14. *There are some questions as to the date of the marriage of Joshua Naylor and Morning Stoggins Harril. In her sworn statement supporting her widow's pension request, she stated that they were married on 11 June 1792. "United States records," images, FamilySearch (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9F9-S9SL?view=fullText : Sep 6, 2025), image 378 of 940; United States National Archives and Records Administration. Image Group Number: 007584784.*

    But an abstract of marriage licenses in Rutherford County, NC, shows the date as 10 September 1799.

    Ancestry.com. Rutherford County, North Carolina, U.S., Marriages, 1779-1868 [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2013. This collection was indexed by Ancestry World Archives Project contributors.

    Original data: Holcomb, Brent H. Marriages of Rutherford County, North Carolina, 1779–1868. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1986.

    This is important because the law granting pensions to widows required that they be married prior to 1794.

15. *1810 U.S. census, Rowan County, North Carolina, page 287 (penned), line 3, Batson Nailer; imaged, "1810 United States Federal Census," Ancestry (https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7613/records/778448?tid=203657777&pid=312709410003&ssrc=pt/: accessed 22 September 2025).*

16. *Robert W. Ramsey, Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747–1762 (University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 10-22; imaged, Internet Archive (https://archive.org/details/carolinacradlese0000rams/: accessed 22 September 2025).*

17. *"U.S., Revolutionary War Pensioners, 1801-1815, 1818-1872," database with images, Ancestry (https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1116/records/122538 : accessed 22 September 2025), entry for Joshua Nailor of North Carolina.*

18. *Find a Grave, database and images (https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/62066192/joshua-naylor: accessed September 22, 2025), memorial page for CPL Joshua Naylor (Dec 1751–24 Jun 1835), Find a Grave Memorial ID 62066192, citing Lanes Chapel Church Cemetery, Montgomery County, North Carolina, USA; Maintained by Beverly, Sharon & John,Jr (contributor 47169632), with tombstone images by Dorothy Wilkie (contributor 47323722).*

Article shared from https://billmooreny.substack.com/p/joshua-naylor-1751-1835

Copyright 2026 Bill Moore

Jane has been researching family history since the early 1990's and incorporating DNA evidence since 2013. In 2024 she started a one-place study. Her Substack publications mainly draw on material from her Websites on the https://weare.xyz platform. She blogs from https://bjnlsgenealogy.substack.com and https://kyeburndiggingsops.substack.com.

1751–1835

SAMUEL GRAY – VETERAN OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Born 22 April 1752, probably in Amherst County, Virginia - Died 23 March 1837, Marshall County, Tennessee. My 4th great grandfather.

I have a number of ancestors who fought in the American Revolutionary War, some were Loyalists and some were Patriots.

Samuel Gray was a patriot. He served on the North Carolina line.

Some Background

As most people will know, the American Revolutionary War arose from growing tensions between residents of Great Britain's thirteen North American Colonies and the colonial government that represented the British Crown in North America. Some people were in favour of independence while others were loyal to George III and Great Britain.

The armed conflict began with a confrontation between British Troops and local militia on 19 April 1775 and ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on 3 September 1783. The Treaty of Paris saw the British Crown acknowledge the United States existence as free, sovereign and independent.

That is what Samuel Gray was fighting for.

Samuel's War Service

On 6 November 1832, at the age of 81, Samuel appeared in open court before the Justices of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions

Image created by x.ai Grok 3

in Bedford County, Tennessee to make declaration, under oath, about his Revolutionary War Service. He did this in order to obtain a pension under the 7 June 1832 Act of Congress1.

What I know about Samuel's War service is limited to what is contained in his declaration; a declaration made on the basis of his memory of events that occurred many years before.

What follows is a transcript of Samuel's war service in his own words:

> *"I entered the service of the United States as a volunteer, for the term of six months under Captain Jesse Walton, some time in the month of November 1776 as well as now recollected; in the County of Wilkes in the State of North Carolina; soon after my enlistment we were ordered to the frontiers to guard the Settlements against the Cherokees – Captain Walton's Company was marched into the Cherokee Nation, or the most of them myself with a few of those was attached to Captain Joseph Herndon's Company of Rangers or Spies who were on constant duty in guarding the frontier settlements of Wilkes and Burke County on the Yadkin River. After my time of service had expired we were permitted to return home from this term of service I received no written discharges.*
>
> *My next term of service was in the year ___ [blank in original but would have been 1780] as well as I now recollect I was drafted for three months and was attached to Captain Richard Allen's Company who was attached to Col. Cleveland's Regiment and were ordered to take up the line of march for King's Mountain; we were joined at the Pleasant Gardens on our route to King's Mountain by the Command of Colonel Campbell [William Campbell], from the head of Holston*

[River?] from which place we marched direct to meet Colonel Ferguson [Major Patrick Ferguson?]; my company was in the engagement, but I was on the morning of the engagement detained with a few others on duty at Camp and did not join my Company until after the engagement was ended – from this place we were ordered to guard the prisoners that was taken at the Battle of King's Mountain we took them to Salem or the Moravian Town where I remained as a guard until the expiration of my term of service where I was discharged.
Soon after my return we were ordered to join General Rutherford, term of 30 days, under Captain Beverly. We joined the Commanding General near Salisbury at the mouth of little Rocky River, we remained here on duty until the expiration of our term of service when we were permitted to return to our homes in Wilkes County.

Some time in the summer of the year 1778 or 79 as well as now recollected, I was drafted for a term of three months. I was attached to Captain Joel Lewis's company who was attached to the Command of Major Hartgroves who marched us through Salem on to Cross Creek where we remained in that section of the County, guarding against the Tories who were extremely troublesome this season and that Section of the State and in the edge of South Carolina.

I was discharged at the end of my term of service and received a written discharge for this term of service from Major Hartgroves which is lost or mislaid so that I cannot have now the benefit of it.

Some time after I volunteered under Captain Richard Allen who was Commanded by Colonel Cleveland. They marched to New River against some Tories and horse thieves, under the Command of a certain Captain Cajlo [?], we drove him out of that part of the County; he was soon afterwards taken by our party and hung – this expedition lasted about 10 or 15 days – I was on duty one or two other short trips but the time or particular service I cannot now recollect the whole term of service which I can distinctly recollect was upwards of thirteen months.

I know of no regular officer except those mentioned and I am now unable to say that they were, I mean I was at different times under Colonel Cleveland, Campbell, Major Hartgroves and General Rutherford, I have no written discharges of my services. My brother John Gray and old Captain Smith of Franklin County. They give their certificates as to my Service, my brother testified to all my Service having been with me, and Smith to one or two campaigns".

A handwritten copy of Samuel's declaration can be viewed on my family history website, https://app.weare.xyz/public/bjnls-family-history-archive/documents/69yrmhrpwe5b

Samuel was granted his war pension. An entry in the Tennessee Pension Roll of 1835 states as follows:

Samuel Gray. Bedford. Private. North Carolina Line. $43.33 Annual Allowance. $86.66. Received May 16 1833 Pension Started Age 822.

Battle of Kings Mountain

To digress slightly ... By his own testimony, Samuel was not directly involved in the Battle of Kings Mountain but he was most definitely there amongst those that did. Consequently, it was one of the places I wanted to visit while on a short trip to the United States. The site of the Battle is preserved within the Kings Mountain National Military Park. I went there in July 2015 and walked the trail.

Battlefield Trail, Kings Mountain National Military Park ©Jane Chapman 2015

The Battle of Kings Mountain took place on 7 October 1780, 9 miles (14 km) south of the present-day town of Kings Mountain, North Carolina in an area that is now rural Cherokee County, South Carolina. The Patriot militia achieved a decisive victory over the Loyalist militia that day. The Battle is considered to be an important turning point in the Revolutionary War3 4.

Information found at the Battlefield Trail, Kings Mountain National Military Park

More about Samuel

Samuel was born on 22 April 17525 to James Gray and Elizabeth 'Betsy' Parks. He was most probably born in Amherst County, Virginia and moved, with his family, to Wilkes County, North Carolina during his childhood.

At the time of the Revolutionary War, most of what is now Tennessee was a part of North Carolina. The area that became Tennessee was quite sparsely populated then. Tennessee became a state on 1 June 17966.

When he commenced his military service, Samuel was living in Wilkes County, North Carolina. He later moved to Bedford County, Tennessee. Soon after the war, many veterans were awarded land in Tennessee for their military service.

Later records show Samuel living in Marshall County, Tennessee. It is likely, though, that this is not because he moved residence but, rather, because he was living in the area of Bedford County that was absorbed into Marshall County, Tennessee when Marshall County was created in February 1836. The County was made up from parts of Giles, Bedford, Lincoln and Maury Counties7.

Samuel died in Marshall County on 23 March 18378.

You can read more about Samuel in my family history archive here. He is my 4th great grandfather.

FOOTNOTES

1. The act approved 7 June 1832 (4 Stat. 529) liberalized the pension program to allow any veteran with six months service to be granted a pension without showing need. See: Claire Prechtel-Kluskens Revolutionary War pension files—an introduction PDF via ngsmagazine 2006-04 (April/May/June 2006) at twelvekey.com.

2. Information from 1835 TN Pension Roll via Tennesseans in the Revolutionary War - TNGenWeb Project [https://www.tngenweb.org/revwar/records/g.htm]. Accessed 20 April 2022.

3. *Battle of Kings Mountain via Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Kings_Mountain]. Accessed 20 April 2022.*

4. *National Military Park via National Park Service [https://www.nps.gov/kimo/index.htm]. Accessed 20 April 2022.*

5. *This date is from the transcript of Samuel Gray's diary found on Ancestry.com - Lincoln County Tennessee Bible Records, Vol. 5 - Bible of Samuel Gray*

6. *Tennessee State Museum How Tennessee became a State [https://tnmuseum.org/junior-curators/posts/how-tennessee-became-a-state?locale=en_us] Accessed 8 October 2022.*

7. *Marshall County via TNGenWeb Project [https://tngenweb.org/marshall/]. Accessed 30 August 2022.*

8. *This date is from the transcript of Samuel Gray's diary found on Ancestry.com - Lincoln County Tennessee Bible Records, Vol. 5 - Bible of Samuel Gray*

Article shared from https://bjnlsgenealogy.substack.com/p/samuel-gray-veteran-of-the-american

Copyright 2026 Jane Chapman

DIANE BURLEY

Author, journalist, mom of two sons. I braid lost moments of history, what has us wincing, and personal experience to offer stories with heart, hope, and humor — because God knows we need all three. I'm always looking for the light..

Diane blogs at "Musings of a Storyteller" at https://dianeburley.substack.com

SCAN ME

1752–1829

JANE RYERSON: REVOLUTIONARY WAR WIFE AND FLAME KEEPER

Her brothers carried titles of Captain and Colonel. But Jane carried her family through war. History is made not only on battlefields but also in kitchens and hearths, where endurance becomes legacy.

Ryerson Farm, circa 1780, owned by Jane's brother Theunis, and indicative of her farm. The farm was erased when the Wanaque Reservoir was built. Photo courtesy of Wanaque Public Library.

My nine-month old grandnephew Rocco was not to be contained.

Tim and I watched him a couple days last week so his parents could work and my sister-in-law could finalize her father's funeral. We strolled the streets, rolled in the grass, patty-caked, drummed – and that was just the first hour. Exhausted, I wondered how women kept generations alive without baby gates, seat restraints, and weighted blankets.

That question became more pertinent when I decided to take up the Stories250 challenge, an homage to those family members who lived during the Revolutionary War period. As we approach the 250thanniversary of our constitution, which appears to be more in peril every day, I took a detour from Leonora in Northern New York in the 19th century to jump back to 18th century New Jersey to visit my fourth great-grandmother.

From Holland to New Netherland to New Jersey

The journey actually began in the previous century when the Ryersen family first migrated from Holland in 1646. In their new home in Brooklyn, Marten became a deacon of the Dutch Reformed Church. His son Frances decided to leave New Netherland (New York) to cross the border into what is now Passaic County, New Jersey.

If you have flown into Newark, you are likely left with the impression that all of New Jersey is ugly oil refineries, smokestacks, and rail yards. It's great camouflage. Less than an hour away there is an embarrassment of fresh water lakes, streams, ponds, and rivers including the Ramapo, Pequannock, and Wanaque.

It's here where the Ryersons and their Dutch friends and family settled. Maybe the waterways reminded them of their native homeland. It was perfect for hunting, fishing, and farming.

Despite the British taking over the colonies from Holland, the Dutch maintained its language,1 culture, and religion in this rich valley. Eight men, including Joris, negotiated with members of the Lenni Lenape tribe for 5500 acres of land.

My fifth great grandparents Joris (George) and Mary Ryerson inherited tracts of land from Frances, and it was there that they raised 10 children. While they too lived during the Revolutionary War, and had at least one son (Martin) who was active in the war, I decided to focus on their eldest daughter, Jannetje (Jane), my fourth-great grandmother.

(Later, after publishing this piece, I realized that Jane's sister Mary, was also a fourth-great grandmother. So this is Mary Ryerson Post's story as well.)

My fifth great grandparents Joris (George) and Mary Ryerson inherited tracts of land from Frances, and it was there that they raised 10 children

Family Time Line
Spouse and Children
Parents and Siblings
1700 1720 1740 1760 1780 1800 1820 1840 1860 1880
George or Joris Francis Reijerse Ryerson 1713–1789
Mary R White 1715–1755
Marriage: 1750
Jane Ryerson 1752–1829
George G Ryerson 1753–Deceased
Dirck Richard G Ryerson 1755–1833
Mary Ryerson 1757–1849
Martin G Ryerson 1759–1820
John G Ryerson 1763–Deceased
Ann Reyerson 1764–Deceased
Hester Ryerson 1766–1813
Theunis T Ryerson 1770–1839
Francis G Ryerson 1772–1834

Jane Ryerson brother Martin was a factory owner in the Pompton Lakes area. Her sister Hester married Major Garret Post, my third great grandparents.

This is a good time to point out that there is bountiful information about the men in Jane's family that stretches back to Marten in 1646 in the form of baptismal, marriage, and land records. Women, by contrast, are far more difficult to trace, and Jane near impossible.

While baptismal records for her siblings are available, I haven't yet found one for Jane. However, I found the mother lode with a book The Genealogy of the Ryerson Family in America. There it lists her birth as May 20, 1752.2 New Jersey didn't yet require marriage licenses, so there is no record of marriage to Dedrick Tice/Tysse. Family genealogists guesstimated their marriage around 1770. In 1789, when her father's will was read in Bergen County, New Jersey, Jane Ryerson finally appears—but not as Jane; she was 'the wife of Dedrick Tice.'

Post includes voiceover version accessible at https://dianeburley.substack.com/p/keep-the-fires-burning

SCAN ME

Under coverture law, Jane had no legal self. That erasure echoes through time: in 1770, Jane Ryerson vanished into her husband's name; in 1970, my mom still couldn't open a credit card without my father's signature.

But as Barbara at Projectkin says, we are here – there must have been women.

Despite the lack of documentation, there is much for me to infer.

Unlike English women who were sequestered from their husbands' businesses, Dutch women were actively involved. Since she was known by the anglicized "Jane" instead of Jannetje, I am assuming she spoke both English and Dutch or "Jersey Dutch." It's also possible she knew some of the native language of the Lenape, which enabled her to deal with the farm's vendors and traders.

Dedrick Tice no doubt saw how valuable a partner Jane would be to run both a home and business.

Typical Day for Dutch Women

Maintaining the home, while handling the books, is hard enough when you have machines to do laundry, stoves to cook meals, cars to run errands, playpens for babies. But in the late 18th century, Jane was both the machine and the workforce. Laundry was an all-day affair that required filling large buckets with boiling water and homemade lye. As I stare at another rainy and windy day – I can't imagine having to hang laundry outside to dry.

While the farm likely had at least one sheep for sheering and cattle for milk, it also produced corn, beans, and grains. Most families maintained a smaller "cooking garden" by the house, where Jane could easily grab root vegetables like potatoes and leeks for meals. She also likely spun wool and made their clothes.

At the start of the war, Jane had two toddlers and was pregnant with a third daughter. Before the war ended, she had added two sons. Three more daughters, including my third great grandmother Hester, were born after the war.

New Jersey was not just a setting but a character in revolutionary battles, and the nearby rivers were essential for moving troops and goods. While no skirmishes took place on their property, fighting was less than a couple miles away.

Similar to today, townspeople -- and even families were divided on loyalties – with a third being for the king and a third for the colonists. Disclosing one's loyalties was dangerous as each side viewed the other as traitors, which is why another third were neutral.

There aren't any records of Jane's husband being on a roll for either army. It is likely they were publicly neutral — although also probably that they favored one side over the other. Janes' father is listed as a Patriot, having rendered material aid.3

Man or Bear

Militias from both sides would demand food from farms. This meant for eight long years Jane was answering the door to hungry and sometimes violent soldiers – likely with a babe in arm or in utero. Today's question of 'Man or Bear' would be all too real – as both were menacing and plentiful. I'd like to imagine that she gave green potatoes to the enemy to inflict them with severe gastrointestinal distress.

As if trying to keep herself and five children alive wasn't enough, she had aging parents. As the eldest, it was customary she'd be helping them out as well.

Sandwiched between generations and warring factions, an average day was highly physical and very long. My grandnephew reminded me of that. I can't fathom how stressful life was.

Why is it we take the efforts of women like Jane (and her sisters) for granted?

And on the whole, society knows the value of these efforts.

There is a patriotic song written during World War I that begs women to "keep the fires burning" – so that young soldiers have a beacon of hope as well as a home full of enthusiasm and love to return to.

Patriotic British song during World War I. Lyrics by Lena Guilbert-Ford. Courtesy Internet Archives.

We glorify the generals – the ones who kept loved ones in harm's way—versus those like Jane who kept the fires burning.

A plaque at a revolutionary cemetery lauding Jane's brother Martin G. Ryerson.

We glorify the generals – the ones who kept loved ones in harm's way—versus those like Jane who kept the fires burning.

The mundane is survival – and it required continuous acts of courage and endurance; tomorrow sprung from embers she kept alive.

Jane's erasure under coverture continues to echo across generations, as women's accomplishments are suppressed and even eliminated. The fight for recognition continues.

I'm happy to be the one to re-ignite Jane's story.

Article shared from https://dianeburley.substack.com/p/keep-the-fires-burning

SCAN ME

FOOTNOTES

1. Well, most of its language. A "Jersey Dutch" evolved.

2. The Genealogy of the Ryerson Family in America, 1902.

3. https://services.dar.org/public/dar_research/search_descendants/?action=list&MyPrimary_Seqn=594033&MyLineageCount=1

Copyright 2026 Diane Burley

1752–1829

SARAH HALL RUSHTON,

CORDWAINER'S WIFE ~ CHAPTER ONE

Anne blogs at
Grandma's Granny's Family Album
https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com

SCAN ME

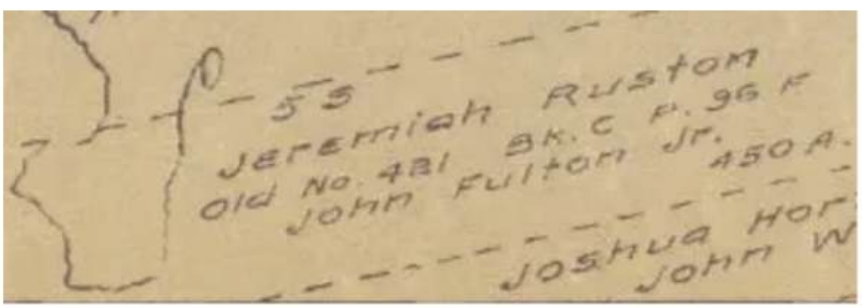
My 4th great-grandmother's life during the American Revolution - Stories 250

Dedicated to the voices of my grandmother and her sisters

The Story of the Cordwainer's Wife....a fictional look

Westchester, Nova Scotia, about 1827

"This is my favorite spot on all of our land grant." Sarah Rushton spread her arms across the small peninsula fashioned by the U-curve of the meadow brook.1 She looked at her daughter Elizabeth, walking the path beside her as the children2 played hide-and-go-seek between trees and behind bushes.



Crown Land Grant Map #70, showing a U-shaped brook on Lot 5 South on the land grant of Jeremiah Rus(h)ton

RECORDED TALK

SCAN ME

"I need to walk," Elizabeth sighed. "My back hurts from sitting, and it's hard to get up and down."

*"The last months are the worst," Sarah agreed. "Is it easier in the evenings, when the older girls are home from school? They **could** stay home and help you, but it's good they learn to read and write.3 I didn't."*

"They do help, but by that time I'm so tired, I just want to lie down. And I like the quiet of just the little ones to worry about. Especially at nap time."

"We can go back whenever you want," Sarah offered.

"No, I need to tire them out so they'll nap. Or at least rest," Elizabeth replied. "And this is a nice smooth path to walk."

"Your younger brothers built me this path. It was their first trial at clearing trees to build something. I was so proud of them when the path was finished."

"Yes, Mama, you've told us this before," Elizabeth said wryly.

"Oh have I?" Sarah's eyes twinkled.

She paused. "I hope when you remove to Upper Canady, you find a favorite spot too," she said softly.

But Elizabeth stopped short. "Mama! What?"

"You think I don't know? You think your father and all six of your brothers4 haven't been talking about your husband's plans for the last year?"

Elizabeth walked a few steps away. "Lucy! Come out where I can see you!" she called. The two-year-old's head popped atop a bush. "All right; you can go back and hide."

"Times are not as good as they were when you were a child. You need to go where the land is more fertile. You need land that's good and level, not like here in the Cobequid Mountains," Sarah went on calmly.

"I don't want to leave home," Elizabeth mumbled, looking at the pebbles beneath her feet.

"Do you think I wanted to leave New York? Everybody and everything I knew? Your father and I had what looked like it could be a good business making shoes. We looked forward to a bright future. There was always something going on in the city, something new every day, different people coming into the shop to talk to."

"I don't think you are recollecting clearly, Mama," Elizabeth replied. "There was a war going on. Papa was away fighting with the Westchester Refugees. You had to leave. What bright future could you possibly have looked forward to?"

"Pfffft!" Sarah spat. "The bright future we thought we were going to have. Wars end. People have to come to their senses eventually. We thought peace would finally be declared, the soldiers would leave,

and we'd all go back to our homes. Rebuild what was in ruins. Start again."

"But they didn't come to their senses, Mama," Elizabeth protested. "You had to leave. The rebels took everything: stole Grampa's shop, burned Grannie's house, turned them off their farm. They said you'd never get anything back that you lost."

"You're right," Sarah conceded. "I was wrong to think it would go back to normal at the end. I was always afraid your father would be killed while he was out raiding, but after Colonel DeLancey went to England and the whole regiment was disbanded, I was afraid he'd be hanged for treason. It didn't mean I ***wanted*** *to leave, tho."*

A Chronicle of a Cordwainer's Wife....a factual account

The Sarah described above married Jeremiah Rushton about 1781,5 perhaps before he enlisted with Colonel James DeLancey's Westchester Refugees in March. Nicknamed Cowboys for their skill at stealing cattle, the Refugees were an irregular regiment committing guerrilla warfare in Westchester County, New York. Jeremiah joined with his own horse, gun, and clothing,6 as the Refugees had no uniforms. They received no pay; they were expected to support themselves or plunder the homes and farms of Patriots. Indeed, they were called Refugees because they had been driven out or burned out of their own homes; their land and possessions had been confiscated by the new rebel government.7

Some families in this time period maintained ties despite differing allegiances; others ruptured.10 Maintaining ties with her birth family would have been difficult for Sarah if they weren't also living within the city. She couldn't read or write,11 and there was no safe travel in

and out of New York City, which the British Army occupied. If the Halls lived outside of its boundaries, there would have been no crossing enemy lines.

Sarah may have already known her future husband when, in the winter of 1777, Jeremiah, his father John and brother Peter, along with many others, took the oath of allegiance to King George in New York City at the request of Royal Governor Tryon. At that time, Jeremiah was apprenticed to a cordwainer; Peter and John were farmers.12 The Rushton family lived in Rye, on the Connecticut border but only about twenty miles from the city line. The Rushtons may have moved into the city by that time or they may have still lived in Rye; John did so much business in the city that he voted and served on a jury there while renting his farm and shop in Rye. He probably did so because the city allowed civic participation without owning land, whereas Rye voters had to be landowners.13 John was a saddler as well as a farmer; most artisans in Rye farmed in addition to selling products of their craft.14

During the War, the city limits were only the southern tip of Manhattan Island. About thirty thousand Loyalists and army personnel were jammed into that space. A fire in 1776 had destroyed much available housing, further jacking up prices. Many people lived in Canvas Town, tents erected among the ashes.15 Black Loyalists, escaped slaves and free blacks who worked for the army, occupied the city center.16 Fresh food entering came from Loyalist Long Island, but supplies were often raided by Patriot fighters in whaleboats.17

Sarah had probably expected to be the wife of a fairly prosperous cordwainer. A cordwainer, so called after the fine leather of Cordoba, Spain, crafted entire shoes from quality leather; it required five more years of apprenticeship than a cobbler, who only repaired shoes. The skills, tools, and materials of a cordwainer did not differ too much from that of a saddler; Jeremiah may have even served his apprenticeship at his father's shop. (One stitch used in both trades has two names: it is called both the shoemaker's stitch and the saddler's stitch).18 While John's customers were wealthy since not many people could afford horses, Jeremiah's customers would have come from every walk of life. It is conceivable that their clients overlapped.

The dark blocks at the tip of York Island indicates the population center - Lodge, John, "Chart and Plan of the Harbour of New York & the County. adjacent...", London, 1781

When New York City's population swelled, the number of shoes needed would have too. Jeremiah probably did a booming business; the whole family may have turned to cordwaining, as the trades were so similar that all the Rushtons were likely able to perform both.19

Cordwaining was a good profession for a family. Cordwainers' shops occupied space in their own homes. Since housing in the city was so scarce, Jeremiah and Sarah probably lived with his parents and six younger siblings, and maybe even his older brother Peter, who had a wife Catherine and children by then.20 Customers ordered shoes in advance;21 Sarah or her mother-in-law Mary would have waited on customers and someone who could write would have kept track of orders.

Shoes were made by fitting leather over molds called lasts. They look like wooden feet to me. Shoes were neither right nor left but straight, meaning they fit on either foot. Most shoes were made for walking long distances.

A wooden straight last. 22

Leather was scraped over a wooden beam until it was thin enough to sew into the right type of shoe. The smooth side became the inside. First, the leather was cut out. Sarah's contribution most likely came when the top, called the vamp, and the sections were sewn together, as those were the tasks most often done by women. They were fitted on the last to determine size. Two soles and a heel were attached. Last, the rough outside was polished with a combination of soot, beeswax, bear grease, and lard.23

Cordwaining tools 24

Since housing was at such a premium, I imagine five adults and five teenagers cordwaining in the same building, maybe a three-story attached structure. The area where Sarah, Mary, and Catherine would have received customers would front the shop that held the workbenches, tools, and curing beam.

It is reasonable to assume that the Rushtons had silver money from their earnings as cordwainers and saddlers in New York City, where a captive population in need of shoes provided a steady custom with access to British silver.25 In the 1700s, the average price of a pair of shoes was about one day's wages for the average journeyman.26 New Hampshire records show that in 1785, making a pair of boots or shoes was equated in value to a day's work in haying or reaping.27 Altho we need to keep in mind that the eight years of wartime inflation would have altered this, New York City journeyman carpenters generally offered to work for 9 shillings a day thru-out the 1700s and 1800s.28

> *If the adults in the household, with the help of teenage apprentices, averaged one pair of shoes a day,29 that's 5 pairs a day. At roughly 9 shillings a pair, that comes to 45 shillings, or about 2¼ pounds, in gross income per day. If the high cost of leather took up an estimated three-quarters of of that,30 the Rushtons would have netted around 11 shillings a day. Over a 300-day working year, that's roughly 170 pounds. If they carried on this business from the winter of 1777, when they signed the oath of allegiance, until they left New York in June 1783, they may have put aside just over 1,000 pounds of British sterling by the end of the occupation.*

However, the cost of living in the wartime city was extremely high, as it wasn't safe to leave, everything had to be imported, and all imports were subject to attack.

Many variables enter into the question: how much coin money do we think the Rushton family had when they were exiled from New York?

Of course, while soles were hammered and customers' wants were satisfied, the daily business of a family went on. Keeping the large family shod was covered, but keeping them fed, clean, clothed, and healthy was the daily struggle undertaken by women. Between shopping for the food coming into the city and preparing it, washing clothes in a kettle of hot water against the constant soot and filth of a crowded space, sewing and mending garments for growing children, the labor would have revolved on a constant wheel. Keeping children alive against disease carried by densely populated newcomers was a challenge that the Rushton women apparently met; altho no records show if any died, early censuses count the many children they brought to Nova Scotia.31

For Chapter Two, please visit the digital version online: https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/sarah-hall-rushton-cordwainers-wife

SCAN ME

> *I wrote this story and chronicle as an assignment in the Revolutionary War ancestor writing class taught by Denyse Allen. I used Claude.ai to research, calculate, and write the paragraphs about the estimated profit earned by the Rushtons' cordwaining business in occupied New York. I also used Claude.ai to help me revise and edit.*

FOOTNOTES

1. *Crown Land Grant Map 70, Crown Land Information Management Centre, https://novascotia.ca/natr/land/indexmaps/070.pdf*
2. *Westchester Township Book Genealogies*
3. *Fergusson, Charles Bruce, Provincial Archivist, The Inauguration of the Free School System in Nova Scotia, Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1964*
4. *Westchester Township Book Genealogies*
5. *Westchester Township Book Genealogies*
6. *Jeremiah Rushton, Memorial, Coldham, Peter Wilson, American (Loyalist) Migrations 1765-1799, p. 330*

7. *"James DeLancey Attributed to John Durand ca. 1778-1782," Society of the Cincinnati. https://www.americanrevolutioninstitute.org/asset/james-delancey-attributed-to-john-durand-ca-1778-1782/#:~:text=BythefallCColonelDeLancey,theirpropertyconfiscatedbypatriots. Accessed January 2026.*

8. *Gilroy, Marion, compiled by, Loyalists and Land Settlement in Nova Scotia, Cumberland County Grants, Public Archives of Nova Scotia.*

9. *Gardner, Andrew G., Courtship, Sex, and the Single Colonist, https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/Foundation/journal/Holiday07/court.cfm*

10. *Wulf, Karin A.,"Despise the mean Distinctions [these] Times Have Made": The Complexity of Patriotism and Quaker Loyalism in One Pennsylvania Family,American University, https://revolution.h-net.msu.edu/essays/wulf.html*

11. *Sarah signed by her mark, Deed of Sale between Jeremiah Rushton and his wife Sarah Rushton and Andrew McKim, 20 June 1814, Cumberland, Nova Scotia, Canada Deeds 1798–1801, 1801–1815, 1815–1822, Volume E-G. Cumberland County (Nova Scotia). Registrar of Deeds, Image Group Number 008189355, "Cumberland, Nova Scotia, Canada records," images, FamilySearch (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLZ-BQHZ-6?view=explore : Jun 15, 2026), image 306 of 575*

12. *Burns, Brendan S. The Loyal and Doubtful, Index to the Acts of British Loyalism in the Greater New York and Long Island Area, Vol. 4. 2023. Rushton, Jeremiah. Oath of Fidelity to King George 1777*

13. *A Copy of the poll list of the election for representatives for the city and county of New York, 1768, Ancestry.com*

14. *Pamela McGuire, Revolutionary Rye 250, The Stirrings of Resistance, Resistance Comes to Rye, presentation on 3 February 2026*

15. *https://www.newyorkalmanack.com/2023/08/british-occupation-new-york-city/*

16. *Hill, Lawrence, The Book of Negroes, HarperCollins, 2007*

17. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Boat_Company*

18. *https://shoemaking.wiki/Shoemaker_Stitch*

19. *Gill, Harold P. Jr., Leather Workers in Colonial Virginia, 1966, p. 43, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series - 0107, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1990*

20. *Cumberland County Genealogies, Westchester Township Book*

21. *https://www.grunge.com/493950/what-life-was-like-as-a-shoemaker-in-the-colonial-era/*

22. *Image from Schenawolf, Harry, Architecture & Places, Colonial Life, Occupations, March 8, 2016, https://revolutionarywarjournal.com/cordwainers/*

23. *Image from Schenawolf, Harry, Architecture & Places, Colonial Life, Occupations, March 8, 2016, https://revolutionarywarjournal.com/cordwainers/*

24. *Image from Schenawolf, Harry, Architecture & Places, Colonial Life, Occupations, March 8, 2016, https://revolutionarywarjournal.com/cordwainers/*

25. *https://www.newyorkalmanack.com/2023/08/british-occupation-new-york-city/*

26. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoemaking*

27. *(University of Missouri Libraries' "Prices and Wages by Decade" guide, which cites the 1872 Report of Commissioners on the Bureau of Labor Statistics to the New Hampshire Legislature as listing, for 1785, "a day's work in haying and reaping" as equivalent in value to "making a pair of boots or shoes.")*

28. *"Historical Money Equivalents: 18th and 19th Century Wages," hosted by the Old Stone Fort museum (theoldstonefort.org), (New York shillings were eight to a dollar, making the wage $1.12½ per day.)*

29. *https://twonerdyhistorygirls.blogspot.com/2010/10/crafting-shoes-for-18th-century-lady.html*

30. *Schenawolf, Harry, Architecture & Places, Colonial Life, Occupations, March 8, 2016, https://revolutionarywarjournal.com/cordwainers/*

31. *1791, Poll Tax Records, https://archives.novascotia.ca/census/polltax/*

Article shared from https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/sarah-hall-rushton-cordwainers-wife

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Anne Wendel

The British fleet amassed off Staten Island in New York Harbor in the summer of 1776, as depicted in Harper's Magazine in 1876. *Learn more: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Long_Island*

***Credit**: Harper's Magazine, 1876. Public Domain.*

ANNE YOUNG

Sharing my family history. I am Australian with forebears from the United Kingdom and Europe. Anne blogs from https://anneyoungau.wordpress.com and https://anneyoungau.substack.com

SCAN ME

1754–1795

WILLIAM DUFF CAPTURED IN QUEBEC IN 1775

#stories250

One of my sixth great grandfathers was a Scottish nobleman, James Duff, Earl Fife of Banffshire (1729–1809). He had at least three illegitimate children, my fifth great grandfather William Duff (1754–1795), his brother James, and a daughter called Jean.

James Duff acknowledged them as his own and all three received a good education at his expense.

William Duff was sent to the Royal Military Academy Woolwich in southeast London, a training college for officers of the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers. On 11 December 1770, William graduated with a commission as Lieutenant in the 7th Royal Fusiliers.

On 15 April 1773, William Duff embarked with his regiment for Canada, the journey taking 11 weeks. He was still in Canada when the American Revolutionary War began in 1775.

The King's Color of the British Seventh Regiment of Foot. It was captured by American forces at Fort Chambly, Canada, in October of 1775. As the first flag captured by the new American Army it was sent to Congress as a trophy. It is now in the West Point Museum. (Photo from West Point Museum Facebook page).

When in that year American forces invaded Canada, most of Duff's regiment was forced to surrender. He was taken prisoner in the capture of Fort Chambly by Rebels on 18 October, and though it was hoped that he might soon be returned in an exchange of prisoners he was not released until early 1777.

Fort Chambly in the 1840s. Image from watercolourworld.org

In February 1777 he wrote to his father from Staten Island, New York, about the purchase of a company in a regiment. William left the 7th Regiment and on 9 April 1777 was promoted to captain in the 26th Regiment of Foot (the Cameronians). Men of the 7th and the 26th regiments had been together at Fort Chambly.

On 4 January 1786 Duff was promoted to Major; at that time the 26th Foot were stationed in Ireland.

On 9 April 1787 at Redmarshall, county Durham, Major Duff of the 26th Regiment married Dorothy Skelly (1768–1840), of Yarm a few miles south. She was the daughter of a naval Officer, the late Captain Gordon Skelly.

In May 1787 William and his new wife sailed for Quebec, where he was put in command of the regimental headquarters. In 1789 the regiment moved, first to Montreal, and then in 1790 to frontier posts along the Niagara River. In 1792 the regiment moved back to St. John's (Fort Saint-Jean) in Quebec.

In 1790 Dorothy gave birth to their daughter Sophia Duff. She was my fourth great grandmother.

A view of St. John's (Saint-Jean, Québec) upon the River Sorell (Rivière Richelieu), Taken in the Year 1776. Image from the Toronto Public Library.

A southwest view of St. John's, Quebec about 1790. Image from Toronto Public Library

William Duff retired from the army in March 1793. On 5 July 1795 he died aged 41 at Fulford, near York.

Article shared from https://anneyoungau.substack.com/p/captured-in-quebec-in-1775

RELATED POSTS

- Major William Duff 1754 – 1795 (https://anneyoungau.wordpress.com/2021/10/18/major-william-duff-1754-1795/)
- Sophia Duff (https://anneyoungau.wordpress.com/2021/09/05/sophia-duff/)

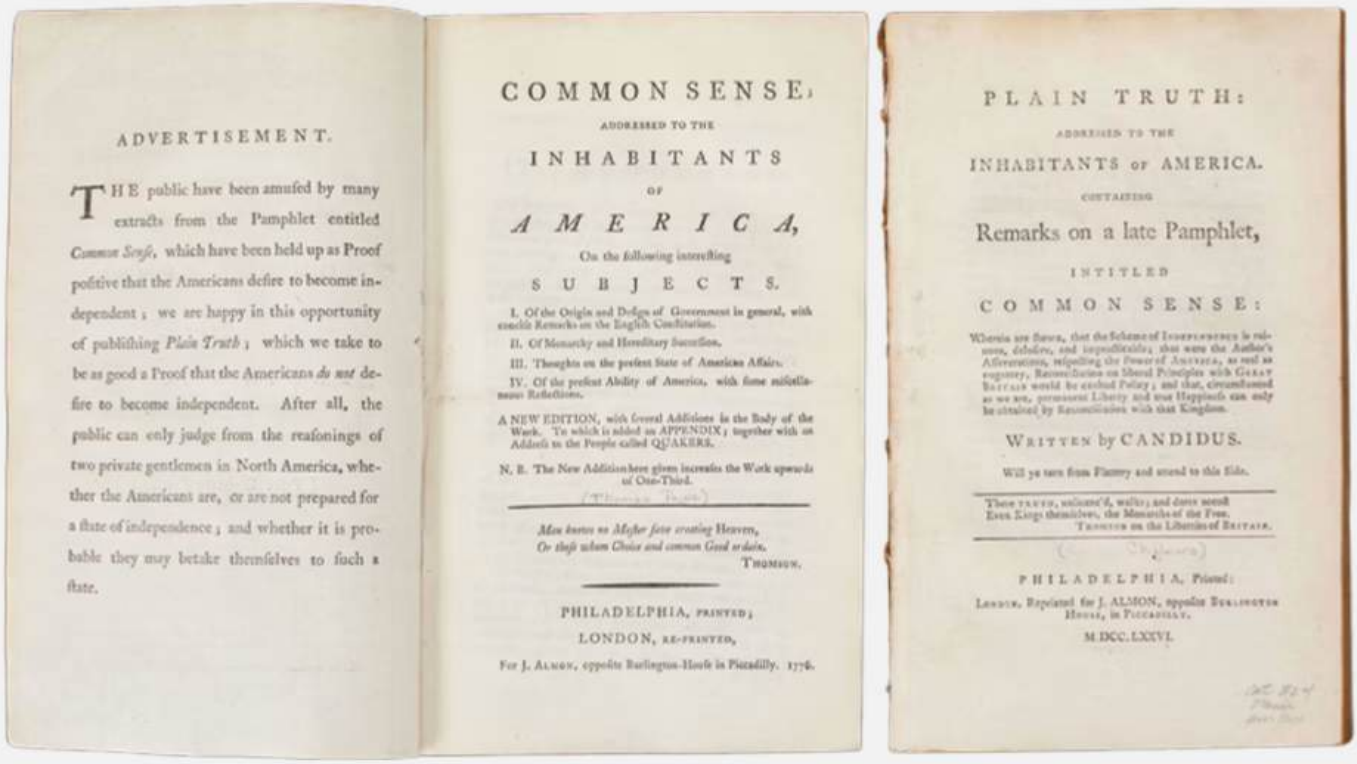
(I had relatives on the other side of the American Revolutionary war too: George III: my part in his downfall)

- Carter, Thomas (1867). Historical Record of the Twenty-Sixth, or Cameronian Regiment. London: W.O. Mitchell. p. 84 and pages 94 ff.

Wikitree:

- William Duff (1754 – 1795)
- Dorothy (Skelly also known as Duff) Tobin (1768 – 1840), William's wife
- Sophia Henrietta (Duff) Mainwaring (abt. 1790 – 1824), William's daughter

Copyright 2026 Anne Young



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE public have been amused by many extracts from the Pamphlet entitled *Common Sense*, which have been held up as Proof positive that the Americans desire to become independent; we are happy in this opportunity of publishing *Plain Truth*; which we take to be as good a Proof that the Americans *do not* desire to become independent. After all, the public can only judge from the reasonings of two private gentlemen in North America, whether the Americans are, or are not prepared for a state of independence; and whether it is probable they may betake themselves to such a state.

COMMON SENSE:

ADDRESSED TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF

AMERICA,

On the following interesting

SUBJECTS.

I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.

II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession.

III. Thoughts on the present State of American Affairs.

IV. Of the present Ability of America, with some miscellaneous Reflections.

A NEW EDITION, with feveral Additions in the Body of the Work. To which is added an APPENDIX; together with an Addreſs to the People called QUAKERS.

N. B. The New Additions here given increaſes the Work upwards of One-Third.

Man knows no Maſter ſave creating Heaven,
Or thoſe whom Choice and common Good ordain.
THOMSON.

PHILADELPHIA, PRINTED;
LONDON, RE-PRINTED,
For J. ALMON, oppoſite Burlington-Houſe in Piccadilly. 1776.

PLAIN TRUTH:

ADDRESSED TO THE

INHABITANTS OF AMERICA.

CONTAINING

Remarks on a late Pamphlet,

INTITLED

COMMON SENSE:

Wherein are ſhewn, that the Scheme of INDEPENDENCE is ruinous, deluſive, and impoſſible; that were the Author's Aſſertions, reſpecting the Power of AMERICA, as real as ſuppoſed, Reaſoning on liberal Principles with GREAT BRITAIN would be cruſhed Policy; and that, circumſtanced as we are, permanent Liberty and true Happineſs can only be obtained by Reconciliation with that Kingdom.

WRITTEN by CANDIDUS.

Will ye turn from Flattery and attend to this Side.

THESE TRUTH, unheard'd, unfelt, and dove unſeen
Even Kings themſelves, the Monarchs of the Free.
THOMSON on the Liberties of BRITAIN.

PHILADELPHIA, Printed:
LONDON, Reprinted for J. ALMON, oppoſite BURLINGTON HOUSE, in PICCADILLY.
M.DCC.LXXVI.

"Common Sense" *by Thomas Paine, and the rebuke,* ***"Plain Truth"*** *by Loyalist James Chalmers. Printed together by London bookseller, John Almon in June 1776. Learn More: https://www.amrevmuseum.org/collection/common-sense-and-plain-truth*

Credit: *In the holdings of the Museum of the American Revolution, 2010.01.00*

HEATHER ROJO

1754–1835

COLONEL JOSHUA BURNHAM OF MILFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

My Revolutionary War Patriots

Heather blogs at Nutfield Genalogy https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com since 2009 and more recently on Substack at nutfieldgenealogy.

SCAN ME

The Colonel Joshua Burnham Tavern in Milford, New Hampshire

This is #1 in a series of posts I intend to write this year for the 250th Anniversary of the USA.

Colonel Joshua Burnham, my 5th great grandfather, was born on 26 January 1754 in Gloucester, Massachusetts, the son of Stephen Burnham (1715 - 1790) and Mary Andrews (b. 1712) of the Chebacco Parish of Ipswich, Massachusetts. Many of his 12 siblings removed away from Massachusetts, just like he did. Joshua died in Milford, New Hampshire on 7 June 1835, and his brother Stephen died in Lyndeborough, New Hampshire. His brother Caleb died in Lake George, New York, and brothers David and Jonathan died in Vermont.

Joshua was a founder of the town of Milford when it became a separate town from Amherst in 1794. He had served in the Revolution as a private from New Hampshire enlisting in April 1775 after the Lexington Alarm under Captain Josiah Crosby for 8 months, and at the end of that term he re-enlisted under Captain Jones of the same regiment for one year. He was at Bunker Hill, New York, Philadelphia, and was discharged at Aesopus (formerly Kingston), New York.

Returning to Milford, he married Jemima Wyman on 21 January 1779 at Wilton, New Hampshire, a contiguous town. She was the daughter of Increase Wyman and Catherine Unknown, born 10 February 1757 in Billerica, Massachusetts, and died on 6 September 1843 at the home of her daughter Jemima Burnham, who lived in South Boston (my 4th great grandmother). In the Milford town records Joshua was on the committee to build a town pound in 1797, and was listed as a taxpayer in 1830.

Joshua Burnham lived on the road to Lyndeborough, New Hampshire, now known as River Road, in a fine house that is still standing about two miles from the center of Milford. It was known as Colonel Burham's Tavern. He sold this farm in 1822 to Jesse Hutchinson, the leader of the famous Hutchinson Family Singers, and they lived there for many years. Jesse and Polly raised 13 of their 16 children there, of whom half were part of the singing group. The Hutchinson family entertained many important historical figures there, including Fredrick Douglass, General Tom Thumb, and P.T. Barnum. The house remained in the Hutchinson family until 1949.

In the biography of the Hutchinson family on pages 8 to 10, see below, is this passage:

> *"Right in the vicinity of these premises was Colonel Burnham, living in the little red house on the hill, which had been selected by his children as a home for his declining years, and situated where he could overlook the surrounding landscape, including a good view of the farm that was once the home of his family and which he had lost by unpaid debts. He was a frequent visitor to the place; and when the fruits were ripe, he would have free access offered by my father and the privilege of obtaining what fruit he desired. There was one very favorite apple, the flavor of which was delicious; and when the apples were ripe, this honorable old gentleman would be seen going and coming with his pockets full, and they were pockets! They were like bags, and he could carry almost half a peck in each one. He would come over, fill his pockets, and then trudge along towards home. He was occasionally visited by officers of the armies of the Revolution; and it was said that one of the staff of Washington was among them.*

> *"My parents honored him by naming Joshua after him. He would frequently show his regard for his namesake by some token, and before passing into his dotage he called him to his house and presented him with a sash worn by him on parade while he was under George Washington's command. This article was carefully preserved, and is still, after the decease of both giver and receiver, an heirloom in the family.*
>
> *"In those early days among the pioneers, education was sometimes neglected. The colonel, though passing through seven years of renown as a discreet officer, could not write his own name, and while in business kept his accounts by characters. For instance, having sold cheese to a person, he would make a mark of that portion of cheese that that man received. His funeral was the first that I had ever witnessed, and the impression was depressingly suggestive."*

Joshua Burnham came upon hard times and lived in poverty in his older years. He applied for a military pension in 1818. The application papers for his pension outlined his service, his life, family members and friends from the war. They also described his poor health and need for a military pension. He died on 7 June 1835 in Milford at age 93, and was buried in the small burial ground about a quarter mile from his tavern house, and buried in a plot near his friend Jesse Hutchinson. His epitaph read "Soldier of the Revolution, zealous in his country's cause, Faithful to the constitution and obedient to it's laws". His wife Jemima applied for, and received, a Revolutionary War Widow's pension in 1838, and she died in 1843.

Col. J. Burnham's gravestone

FOR THE TRULY CURIOUS

- *Tombstone Tuesday - Joshua Burnham's gravestone: https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2013/10/tombstone-tuesday-col-joshua-burnham.html*

- *2010 blog post "The Illiterate Colonel" (I have since discovered he was quite literate and signed many documents) https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2010/01/illiterate-colonel.html*

- *2017 blog post "Joshua Burnham Proves His Military Service" https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2017/06/joshua-burnham-proves-his-military.html*

- *2017 blog post "Jemima (Wyman) Burnham applies for a Revolutionary War Widow's Pension" https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2017/06/jemima-wyman-burnham-applies-for.html*

- *2014 blog post showing my BURNHAM lineage: https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2014/05/surname-saturday-burnham-of-chebacco.html*

and in books:

- *A manuscript **Old Houses of Milford**, compiled in a notebook for Wadleigh Memorial Library, Milford, New Hampshire*

- ***The Story of the Hutchinsons** by John Wallace Hutchinson, 1896 (see pages 8 -10 for the information on Colonel Joshua Burnham and his house he sold to Jesse Hutchinson of the Hutchinson family singers).*

- ***The History of Milford**, by George A. Ramsdell, Rumford Press, Concord, New Hampshire, 1901, see page 783.*

Article shared from https://substack.com/home/post/p-191126629

Copyright 2026 Heather Rojo

LINDA STUFFLEBEAN

Linda is an avid genealogy researcher and blogger. She has been a family history researcher since 1979. She blogs daily at https://emptybranchesonthefamily tree.com and has occasionally posted to Substack.

SCAN ME

1756–1844

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR EXPERIENCE OF JOHN STUFFLEBEAN

Probably Not What He Expected!

John Stufflebean, my husband's 4X great grandfather, baptized as Johannes Stoppelbein on 28 February 1756 in Kinderhook, Columbia, New York, was a pensioned soldier of the American Revolution. His application tells the story of his life, mostly lived on the frontier, and in places where primary records are sadly lacking.

Here is his story, recorded by the Estill County, Kentucky clerk on 21 August 1832, from John's own memories:

When the Revolutionary War began, John Stufflebean was living in New York, near the New jersey and Pennsylvania state lines.

In 1776, Captain Jacob DeWitt formed a company of rangers to guard the frontier in the portion of New York State that today forms Orange and Ulster Counties. John Stufflebean enlisted and served as a private, probably for much longer than he ever envisioned given his capture by the Indians.

The clerk recording John's pension statement in 1833 said John was illiterate. He couldn't read or write even so much as to sign his name, nor could his children according to the clerk.

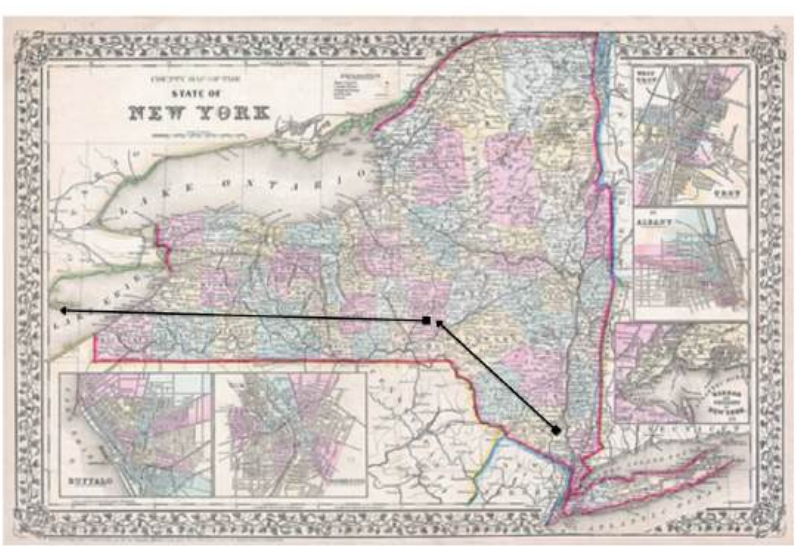
John's lack of formal education was definitely no reflection on his innate intelligence. He lived a long life, much of it spent on various frontiers, including the Revolutionary War frontier.

His life during the war was much more tumultuous than most others. Service in Captain Jacob DeWitt's company started off rather quietly with postings to towns like New Windsor, New York and Hackensack and Paramus in nearby Bergen County, New Jersey, all relatively close to home.

However, in 1778, while out on reconnaissance, John was captured by Colonel Joseph Brant's Indians and taken prisoner.

Colonel Joseph Brant, Wikipedia

He detailed how the Indians and prisoners crossed the Delaware River on logs and wooden rafts, continued traveling westerly across New York and crossed the Susquehanna River in the same manner. Eventually, they arrived at the Mohawk settlement located about eighteen miles south of Niagara Falls.



John's pension declaration includes being forced by the Indians to run the gauntlet, which was a daunting experience for anyone. The gauntlet was created by two rows of men wielding various types of weapons. It was a public spectacle designed to embarrass, punish and humiliate, but men sometimes died from their wounds. Those who survived were deemed to have displayed bravery and, perhaps, like Revolutionary War General John Stark from New Hampshire, physically fought back and earned the admiration of their captors.

John Stufflebean said no more of his own gauntlet experience, but he was a young man in his 20s and likely physically fit enough to hold his own as he survived and lived many more years.

About 1780, the Mohawks sold their prisoners to Col. John Butler, reportedly for a barrel of whiskey. They were then taken to Detroit and held for a little more than two years.

John did not mention in his pension application that, in 1783, he agreed to fight for the British. However, his name appears on a single muster roll of Butler's Rangers, signed by Jacob Ball, as "John Stufflebem" on command to Detroit.

After years as a prisoner of war, John may well have seen agreeing to join the British as his best hope for escaping. He is only found on that one muster roll and another fateful meet up also occurred in 1783.

John and five other soldiers, presumably all patriots who saw their chance for freedom, took off from their assignments, traveled down the "Lake of Water" (Lake Erie?) for over 100 miles through wilderness to the Muskingum River and then to the Ohio River.

From there, they met up with James Garrard's company heading into Kentucky.

Kentucky Governor James Garrard, c1818

James Garrard, later governor of the State of Kentucky from 1796-1804 organized a company of settlers heading from Virginia to the frontier near the close of the American Revolution. John described how Mr. Garrard took some convincing that the men were really patriots and not British soldiers looking for trouble, but they were accepted into the group. That is how John Stufflebean came to make Kentucky his home for most of the rest of his life.

Kentucky was very much the frontier in 1783 and, like Col. Garrard, John Stufflebean originally settled near Paris, Bourbon County. Records are scarce that early in Kentucky, but John does appear on the Bourbon County tax list in 1790 with one white tithe and two horses or mules..

John remained in Kentucky for most of the years of his long life, marrying twice, raising a large family of seven sons and one stepson. However, in the early 1840's, John and wife Elsee moved to Kankakee, Randolph, Illinois, to be cared for by their son, Jacob.
John Stufflebean died there on 16 January 1844.

There are statements to be found that John was married in New York and had a couple of children, but no record of them has ever been found.
John must have wondered at how his life turned out, far from New York and his extended family. It's not likely that, when he enlisted in military service, that he ever expected to end up in a place he had never heard of - Kentucky.

Article shared from https://lindastufflebean.substack.com/p/the-revolutionary-war-experience

Copyright 2026 Linda Stufflebean

The United Colonies
THREE DOLLARS.
No.
THIS Bill entitles the BEARER to receive Three SPANISH milled DOLLARS, or the Value thereof in Gold or Silver, according to a Resolution of CONGRESS, passed at Philadelphia February 17, 1776.
EXITUS · IN · DUBIO · EST ·
THREE DOLLARS.

Three Dollar-denominated paper currency of the American Revolution, *also called a "Continental." Bears the image of an eagle attacking a crane with the motto "Exitus in dubio est" or "The outcom is in doubt." Bills printed by David Hall and William Sellers Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1776.*
Credit: *In the holdings of the Museum of the American Revolution, n 2003.00.0520*

BARBARA TIEN

Barbara is the "ringleader" at Projectkin and is committed to helping more people get their stories told. She writes for both her Substack publications at https://Projectkin.org, and https://MissionGenealogy.org.

SCAN ME

1756–1845

PRIVATE EZEKIEL ROSS

Revolutionary War and the Call of the West

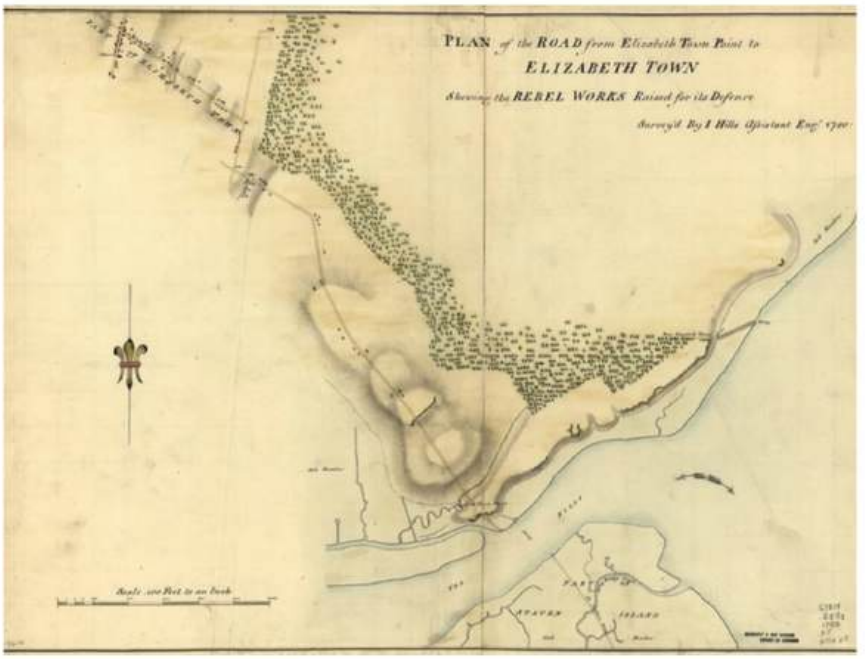
Meet my 5th great-grandparents, Ezekiel Ross (1756-1845) and Ruth Maxwell (1757-1819)1. Ezekiel was the eldest of five children born to his parents, David Ross (1720-1795) and Hanna Ogden (1722–1791). A few weeks ago, I posted a backgrounder about David Ross' dramatic moment at the start of the war and our connection to the founding myth of the famous American seamstress:

Truth, Betsy Ross, and the Rabbit Hole of the American Revolution 250 years ago
(https://projectkin.substack.com/p/truth-betsy-ross-stories250)

In that post you'll read about how David Ross played a modest part in a dramatic takeover of the Blue Mountain Valley at Sandy Hook. By comparison, Ezekiel's record reveals no featured roles or glamorous heroism. His military career lasted about five years, from 1776 through the end of the revolution in 1781. In the end, he survived and played his part in harrowing battles as the Continentals defended the strategic shores of New Jersey.

When he joined the militia company commanded by William Simmons in the Spring of 1776 in Elizabethtown, Essex County, New Jersey, it was just a few months after his father's January escapade with the swashbuckling Col. William Alexander (a.k.a. "Lord Stirling.")

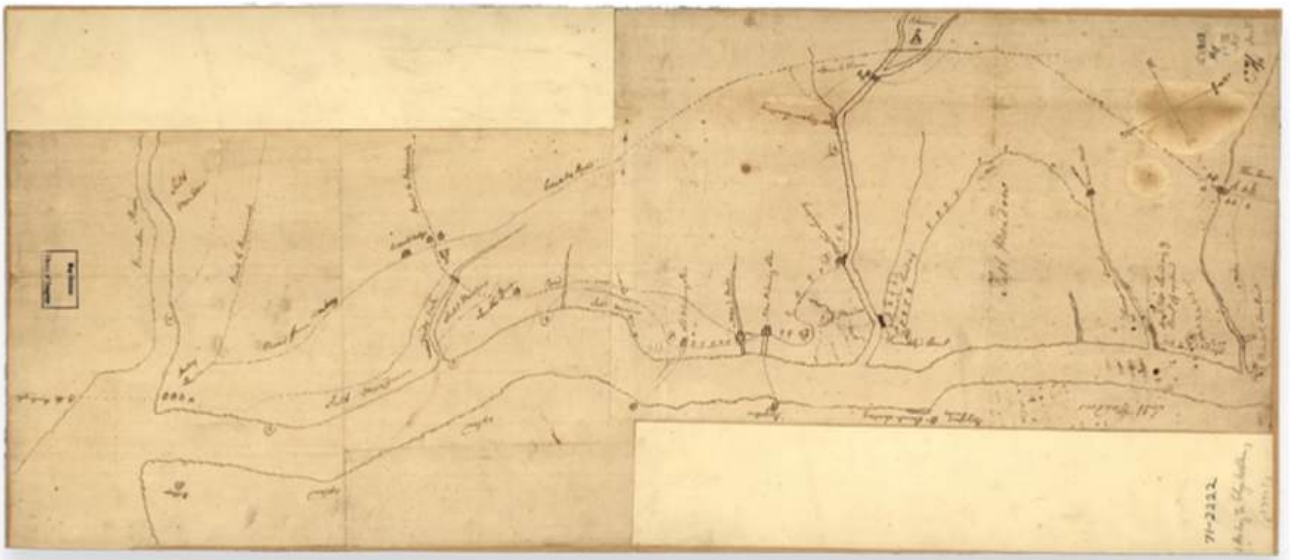
According to the statement supporting his pension in 1832, he was placed under the command of Captain Brookfield and marched to Staten Island, where he "took the property" up to Elizabethtown Point as the British fleet moved into New York Harbor. His company was attached to a regiment commanded by Colonel Moses Jaques. (He is referred to as Jaquish or Jaquesh in his testimony below.)


PLAN of the ROAD from Elizabeth Town Point to
ELIZABETH TOWN
Shewing the REBEL WORKS Raised for its Defence
Surveyd. By J. Hills Assistant Engr. 1780

Hills, John. "Plan of the road from Elizabeth Town Point to Elizabeth Town: shewing the rebel works raised for its defence." [1780] Map. loc.gov/item/gm72003610.

Ezekiel Ross' memory sounds distinctly muddled in this testimony.2 By 1832, he was already 76 years old.:

> *"Applicant saith that he joined himself to a company commanded by William Simmons in Essex County, New Jersey, in the spring of 1776 but the month in which he so joined himself as a private, he cannot recollect that said company was attached to a regiment commanded by Colonel Jaquish, at least it was called Jaquesh's Regiment...*
>
> *"He then was placed under the command of said Captain Brookfield, as the applicant thinks he was called and by him Brookfield was marched to Staten Island and remained there about five weeks, where, in consequence of the arrival of the British Fleet he, with the company to which he was attached, was ordered off by his commandant and he assisted in taking the property of said Island, with them, to Elizabeth Town point. They then stayed at Elizabeth Town point for two months or more during which time applicant was employed in building the Redoubt or Fortification at said point.3*
>
> *"Elizabeth Town point was then made made the place of general Rendivouse , from which place he was occasionally marched to meet the enemy, whenever information of their approach had been received. In this way he was marched under Col. Jaquesh,4 Col. Potter, Geberal Maxwell5. Gen. Winans, Col. Frelingheysen, all of whom were personally known by the applicant.*
>
> *"In the summer of that same year the applicant joined the army, as is his general belief, he fought in the battle of Trembly's Point6, under the command of Col . Scudder7 or Major Craig,8 he cannot be certain which.*
>
> *"He was here taken prisoner and remained so for about six weeks, and was wounded by the but of a gun after the manner set forth in his former declaration. Col Scudder afterward got possession of some British prisoners with which an exchange was made and applicant was restored to his own army. This took place about six weeks after the battle was fought.*



"Amboy to Elizabethtown" [1780?] Shows the eastern part of Middlesex and Union counties opposite Staten Island. Amboy is to the left, and Elizabethtown is to the right. (Rotated left for fit in this post.) From the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, Accessed at ArgoMaps (https://argomaps.org/maps/commonwealth:q524n9637).

His statement goes on to describe several battles, including:

- One other at Elizabeth Town under the command of Colonel Crane9
- Battles of Connecticut Farms, Springfield10
- Orange
- Watsessen (Watsessing region, perhaps?)
- Second River
- Amboy
- Woodbridge
- Short Hills
- Piscataway
- Defense of New Jersey at Middlebrook

Scan of Ezekiel Ross' pension application dated 1832. Transcribed and made available at FamilySearch full-text search: https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89D6-6JW?view=fullText&lang=en&groupId=M9KY-73F

> *"In all the battles above enumerated the applicant served as a private soldier. He says that, in 1777 or 1778 at the time Washington lay at Middlebrook he applied and served under Ichabod Miller who was a wagon master. He was principally emplyed in hauling wood for the army at Middlebrook. In this situation he says he served six months."*

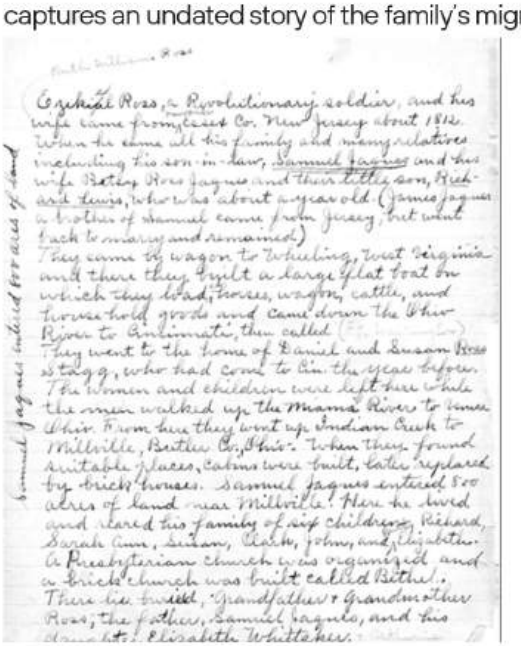
Hauling wood seems a modest contribution to the war effort. Given the brutality of these battles, however, it's remarkable he survived so many of them.

Ezekiel's adult life after the war tells another American story: Large families and westward migration.

Ezekiel and Ruth had a total of ten children while living in Westfield, Union County, New Jersey. Their first two children, Aaron and Susannah, were born during the revolution (1778 and 1780, respectively. It apparently helped that he served close to home.) Another seven or eight children were born between the end of hostilities in 1781 and 1796: Eliakim, Maxwell, Elizabeth (Betsy), Lewis, Amos, Hannah, and Jabez.

As if they'd been waiting for their children to reach maturity, Ezekiel and Ruth decided to move west when the youngest was about 18. Ezekiel's pension application statements, filed in Butler County, Ohio, in 1832, reference the family's move west 18 years earlier, on or about 1814. I have no data on the family's means of support as they raised this large family in New Jersey.

While looking for the details of the move and sorting through records of a land purchase for $800, I bumped into this charming report11 that captures an undated story of the family's migration to Ohio:



Ezekiel Ross, a Revolutionary soldier, and his wife came from Essex Co. New Jersey about 1812. With them came all his family and many relatives including his son-in-law, Samuel Jaques and his wife Betsy Ross Jaques and their little son, Richard Lewis, who was about a year old. (James Jaques a brother of Samuel came from Jersey, but went back to marry and remained)
They came by wagon to Wheeling, West Virginia and there they built a large flat boat on which they loaded horses, wagon, cattle, and household goods and came down the Ohio River to Cincinnati, then called Losantiville. They went to the home of Daniel and Susan Ross Stagg, who had come to Ohio the year before. The women and children were left there while the men walked up the Miami River to Lemon Ohio. From here they went up Indian Creek to Millville, Butler Co. Ohio. When they found suitable places, cabins were built, later replaced by brick houses. Samuel Jaques entered 800 acres of land near Millville. Here he lived and reared his family of six children, Richard, Sarah Ann, Susan, Clark, John, and Elizabeth. A Presbyterian church was organized and a brick church was built called Bethel. There lie buried, Grandfather & Grandmother Ross; the father, Samuel Jaques, and his daughter, Elizabeth Whittaker.

Found on Ancestry's Library edition, letter references "Ezekiel Ross from Edna Jaques." I can't be sure of her connection to my family, though I suspect she was a child at the time this was written.

The report tells a story about how the family moved west to Butler County, north of Cincinnati, Ohio:

> *Ezekiel Ross, a Revolutionary soldier, and his wife, Ruth Williams Ross,12 came from Newark (?), Essex Co., New Jersey around 181213. When they arrived, all his family and many relatives,14 including his son-in-law Samuel Jaques, his wife Betsy Ross Jaques, and their young son Richard Lewis, who was about a year old, were there.*

This underscores the connection between the Ross and Jaques families. Both families included father-son pairs who fought in the revolution. We've heard about David and Ezekiel Ross. The groom's father, Samuel Jaques, Jr. (1739-1803), and grandfather, Samuel Jaques, Sr. (1703-1780) fought in the Revolution. (Yes, that's three generations of Samuel Jacques.)

Further, when the youngest Samuel, our groom Samuel Jacques (1772-1841), married Elizabeth (Betsy) Ross (1784–1870), he was connecting the Jaques and Ross families that fought together during the war. During his war service, Ezekiel Ross served under Col. Moses Jaques, his future son-in-law's 2nd cousin twice removed.

The report continues to describe the Ross and Jaques families floating down the Ohio River to Cincinnati from Wheeling, Virginia, with their "horses, wagon, cattle, and household goods."

Offering a tip about their destination, the report goes on to explain:

> *They went to the home of Daniel and Susan (Ross) Stagg, who had come to Cin. the year before.*

Susan Stagg was probably Susanna Ross15 Betsy's sister, Ezekiel, and Ruth's eldest daughter.

Open Street Map showing the area around Millville, Ohio

This walk introduces all sorts of questions, like:

- Cabins "were" built? By whom?
- Why did they set out to walk to this location?
- Did they have an option to purchase this land?
- Did Ezekiel have a special offer to acquire land as a war veteran?
- 800 acres? Or $800? Where did he get that money?

> *Here, he lived and reared his family of six children: Richard, Sarah Ann, Susan, Clark, John, and Ruth Elizabeth*

This is describing Ezekiel and Ruth's children, Betsy Ross and Samuel Jaques, and their children:

- *R*ichard Lewis Jaques (1811–1896)
- Samuel Clark Jaques (1814–1854)
- Sarah Ann Jaques (1816–1864)
- Susan Jane Jaques (1817–Deceased)
- John Maxwell Jaques (1819–1902) — my 3x great-grandfather.
- Ruth Elizabeth Jacques (1822–Deceased)

I expect our family will remain confused about a connection to the myth of Betsy Ross. I hope this post lays out a structure that is a little more transparent and gives me an infrastructure to build on.

I hope to build on this for future stories that explore our ties to Quakerism in Ohio and Indiana. Looking back, I realized that I'd discussed this briefly in a project recipe for an interactive story in 2023.16 Such is the nature of family storytelling. You go back over the same stories — again and again.

- **Family History Projects & a Project Recipe for Holiday Gift Giving** (https://projectkin.substack.com/p/family-history-projects-and-a-project)

Family Endnote

- Mentioned in this story:
- Samuel Jaques, Sr. (1703-1780)
- Samuel Jaques, Jr. (1739-1803)
- Ezekiel Ross (1756-1845)
- Ruth Maxwell (1757-1819)
- David Ross (1720-1795)
- Hanna Ogden (1722–1791)

- Daniel Stagg (1774–1855)
- Susanna Ross (1780-deceased)
- Richard Lewis Jaques (1811–1896)
- Samuel Clark Jaques (1814–1854)
- Sarah Ann Jaques (1816–1864)
- John Maxwell Jaques (1819–1902)
- Ruth Elizabeth Jacques (1822–Deceased)
- Ruth Williams (Ross), or is it Ruth Maxwell (1757-1819)

FOOTNOTES

1. *Unfortunately, I don't know much about Ruth Maxwell's family. That's an area for further research. This story will focus on the Ross and Jaques families.*

2. *Most of this comes from testimony written with the assistance of Ichabod Miller, who described himself as a boyhood friend and his boss and wagonmaster at one point during their joint service. This is important because Ichabod Miller validated his pension in 1832, over forty years after they served together in the war. I wish I knew more about him.*

3. *See title map, "Plan of the road from Elizabeth Town Point to Elizabeth Town: shewing the rebel works raised for its defence." loc.gov/item/gm72003610.*

4. *Likely Col. Moses Jaques, findagrave.com/memorial/6892545/moses-jaques Created by: Rich H, ID# 46489213; Added: 29 Oct 2002.*

   I haven't found a direct connection, but here's our added Betsy:
   - *Col. Moses Jaques (23 June 1747 – 16 July 1824) was a second cousin to Samuel Allen Jaques (3 Nov 1703 - 1 May 1780).*
   - *Samuel Allen Jaques's son, Samuel Jaques Jr. (29 April 1739 – 2 September 1803), served with the Middlesex County and New Jersey Militia.*
   - *Samuel Allen Jaques's grandson (conveniently, is also named) Samuel Jaques (28 Oct 1772 - 4 Jun 1841) goes on to marry our Ezekiel's daughter, Elizabeth (Betsy) Ross (24 March 1784 – 8 August 1870), on 2 February 1802 in Westfield, Union, New Jersey.*

5. *This is likely General William Maxwell, who commanded Continental Army and New Jersey Militia forces in the Battle of Connecticut Farms. Gleaned from Union, New Jersey, offers a description of the battle. Revolutionarywarnewjersey.com/new_jersey_revolutionary_war_sites/towns/union_nj_revolutionary_war_sites.htm*

6. *I can't guess what battle they're referring to. Statements from respected sources like the Sons of the American Revolution don't list a Trembly's Point battle.*

7. *Likely Nathaniel Scudder, See Adelberg, Michael "Nathaniel Scudder Killed during Loyalist Raid" monmouthhistory.org/250/nathaniel-scudder-killed-during-loyalist-raid. Unclear when he might have been in New Jersey.*

8. *Unclear what Major Craig this is a reference to.*

9. *Might this have been Stephen Crane, who played various political roles in Essex in the late 1770s? According to his Wikipedia entry, he was "bayoneted by Hessian soldiers passing through Elizabethtown on their way to the Battle of Springfield on June 23, 1780."*

10. *More about the battles in New Jersey from Connecticut Farms to Springfield in the resources on this Wikipedia page.*

11. *I've assumed it was written by a child as if for a school report, but there's no detail in the original file. The image is attached to the record for Pvt. ARevW [NJ Miltia] Ezekiel George Oury Ross (7 Sep 1756-13 Feb 1845) in the Mills/Johnson Family Tree. Other pension details and records are consistent with those of Ezekiel Ross.*

12. *I have more research to do here, as other records reference Ruth Maxwell, but this Ruth Williams is consistent with my family tradition.*

13. *I'm willing to accept a possible error between 1814 and 1812. Pension records say 18 years before 1832.*

14. *"Many relatives" might refer to Ezekiel and Ruth's ten children, the youngest of whom would have been 16 in 1814. The oldest, Betsy Ross, comes up again, here married to Samuel Jaques, along with Richard Jaques, who was apparently the third child, yet the first to survive childhood. Born in 1811, he would have been very young in 1814.*

15. *I've assumed this is a reference to Daniel Stagg, 1774–1855, and his wife Susanna Ross (1780-deceased). However, the FamilySearch record doesn't make that connection. There's a likely duplicate file for Susannah Ross, who was born in 1780, had no death date, and married Daniel Stagg in 1814. The eldest of their children is also a Richard, born in 1802. By 1814, young Richard would be 12.*

16. *Maybe this story will be a good one for me to revisit when exploring this family line after they moved to Indiana.*

Article shared from https://projectkin.substack.com/p/ezekiel-ross-1756-1845

Copyright 2026 Barbara Tien

ANNE WENDEL

1757–1838

Anne blogs at Grandma's Granny's Family Album https://grandmasgrannysfamily album.substack.com .

SCAN ME

REVOLUTIONARY WAR COWBOY

Jeremiah Rushton stole for King and Country - Stories250

My 4th great-grandfather Jeremiah Rushton was a Cowboy. And by that I don't mean that he was riding the western plains on horseback and lassoing longhorns while singing "Home on the Range." I mean that he stole cows.

Several Loyalist leaders were of the wealthy DeLancey family,1 so they are often confused. Oliver DeLancey commanded a reputable regiment with uniforms and salaries.2 His nephew James ran a gang of thieves.3

Going to someone else's land and taking their possessions without their permission is usually called stealing. Except in wartime, when it is called capturing. Or, more benign, foraging. Sometimes, so innocent-sounding, living off the land.

So when you and all your neighbors in Westchester County, New York, have a nice life, big family, prosperous business, comfortable home, why would you want to risk it all to rebel against your mother country? Complain, yes. Petition, sure. But actually commit treason?

"Cowboys and Skinners Plundering Civilians", illustration created for James Fenimore Cooper, The Spy, 1821, https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/the-revolutionary-war-neutral-ground-of-westchester-county-new-york.htm

Enlistment

I often wondered why Jeremiah didn't enlist until 1781,4 when the Revolutionary War was effectively over. He didn't want to fight, but he wanted to make sure he got a land grant? He wasn't old enough? He didn't have 20/20 hindsight to know the war was lost? None of these are true. The battles in Westchester didn't start in earnest until 1781, when the British Army withdrew and the Loyalists were left unprotected.

A Fictional Look at Jeremiah's Enlistment

> *"I am a Cowboy." Jeremiah feels a little silly repeating that to himself over and over again, but at least none of the other riders in the regiment can tell. The most they see is the satisfied smile on his face. Life is finally starting to go in the right direction.*
>
> *His sweetheart, Sarah Hall, has agreed to marry him over the objections of her father. It's been a long courtship since the Hall family, like just about everyone else in Connecticut it seems, is in favor of the American colonies banding together to demand their independence from their rightful king. Sarah's brothers have even taken up arms in the rebellion; the thought of fighting against them is what has kept him from joining up himself. Surely Sarah would never want to be on the opposite side of her family in a fighting war.*
>
> *But stunningly, she has agreed. She told him that at age twenty-eight, she is not going to let anyone stand in the way of living her own life, and if that means leaving the bosom of the Hall family to cast her lot with the Rushtons, so be it. Jeremiah's parents are delighted, of course, as well as his four sisters and three brothers. Everyone loves Sarah.*
>
> *They plan to be married by the Anglican minister in Rye as soon as it can be arranged. The logistics are tricky.*

I believe Jeremiah was born in Rye, a New York town so close to the Connecticut border, it had been the subject of disputes for years over which colony it belonged to.5 Jeremiah's maternal grandfather, Hanness Coon, lived in Rye, and Jeremiah was probably named for his uncle Jeremiah Coon. Jeremiah's father, John Rushton, was a witness to Hanness's will, so that tells us that the families were close both emotionally and locationally. Plus, John was a saddler6 and Jeremiah apprenticed to a cordwainer,7 occupations that needed a steady supply of customers to buy saddles and shoes, i.e., a town. Rye had numerous farmers who worked skilled trades, especially in winter.8

Raids in Westchester

Rye was just about the last place anyone would want to live during a Revolution: officially in predominantly Loyalist New York, only 25 miles from British-held New York City, but located right on the border of rebellious Connecticut. Situated on the Boston Post Road, it was a main overnight point for the Sons of Liberty to preach as well as Connecticut "banditti" to plunder on their way to and from raiding targets in New York City.9 The Cowboys especially stole livestock, raided homes and fields and killed people, causing Rye's residents to abandon farms and flee. The population at the first United States census in 1790 was 986. Only 250 more people than there were in 1710, I think it represents war's steep decline. Rye endured a long recovery.10

1832 Plan or Map of Westchester County, New York showing the 1777 Battle of White Plains, https://www.geographicus.com/P/AntiqueMap/westchester-marshall-1832

All of Westchester County was a danger zone. It was a rectangular-ish section of land occupying the 25 miles between British-occupied New York City to the south and Peekskill to the north, where the Continental

Army had set up camp. Only 10 miles separated the strategic Hudson River on the west and Connecticut Province on the east. Since no army controlled the land, no government functioned either. Therefore there was no law enforcement, and inhabitants were subject to raids from both sides.11

Royal Governor Tryon of New York fled to a British war-ship in October 1775 to avoid arrest. He ran the government from there until the British occupied New York in September 1776 and "civil government was...superseded by military rule." Governor Tryon assured the "friends of order and good government" that they would be protected, but all others would be dealt with as rebels.12 That proved impossible.

It was not safe to declare your allegiance to either side, as it was impossible to discern the identity of the ruffians approaching your house. On the other hand, if you claimed to be neutral, both sides would attack or accuse you of being a spy!

A Fictional Look at Jeremiah's Home

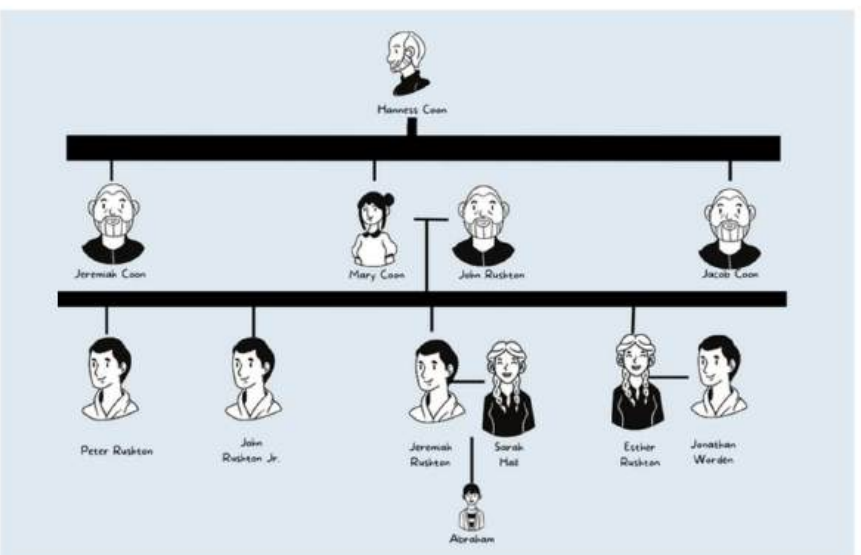
> *Jeremiah's forehead unconsciously creases into a frown. His thoughts drift backwards to his teen years. He had begun to hide in the background of his father's saddle shop, away from customers. He hesitated to look at their faces, but listened carefully, keeping his breathing steady as conversations went on above him. If someone made a political statement, his muscles tensed. Would he have to use his fists? Once a quick "God save the King!" in parting had led to blows.*
>
> *Jeremiah was almost twenty when he, his father, and brother Peter Rushton declared as Loyalists by taking the oath of fidelity to King George.13 By that time he was apprenticed to a cordwainer, an occupation that applied his leather-working skills to fine shoes instead of saddles. The cordwainer had opened shop one morning to find all the shoes stolen, windows, benches, and tools smashed. He closed shop immediately and took his family to New York City.*
>
> *After that, Jeremiah returned to the saddlery. His father needed another strong man to protect their property and keep the women and children away from danger. He had felt bold enough then to look customers in the eye, even stare them down, gauging their voices. Would they pay fairly or seize a saddle and run off? More than once he had sprung into action after a ruffian grabbed saddles and coins. Jeremiah had brandished a knife, but never cut a man. Now in the Cowboys, he would have to.*
>
> *Jeremiah shakes his head firmly and feels his teeth clench, remembering the fall afternoon when the family had come home from church to find their full field, just ready for harvest, ablaze. They had all rushed in with water buckets but only*

few crops on the edges were salvaged. Luckily the fire hadn't spread to the barn. Only a week later, the ten of them rode in the wagon to New York City, carrying household goods and saddles to sell. Jeremiah's mother promised the younger children they would return at war's end. His father affected a cheery tone as he declared that the warhorses of the city would all need saddles.

Feeling the pain in his jaw, Jeremiah unclenches his teeth and forces himself to look around. Even tho the fields are barren and trees bare, the sight softens his shoulders. He breathes the fresh breeze of spring coming, so welcome after the stench of smoke, horse excrement, and garbage of the city. Without brick buildings to block his view, he can see for miles.

He finds himself repeating with the beat of the horse's hooves, Get, Back, Our, Land. If it means stabbing a rebel to death, he thinks he can do it.

The Rushtons I have found so far declared as Loyalists, as did Jeremiah's uncles Jacob and Jeremiah Coon. Jeremiah was the son of John and Mary Coon Rushton.14 He married Sarah Hall, who may have come from neighboring Connecticut, and their son Abraham was born into war in 1782.15



Partial family tree made with Canva

Jeremiah enlisted in March 1781, and engaged in James DeLancey's Westchester Refugees until he left New York in 1783.16 I believe his sister Esther's future husband Jonathan Worden did also, altho he may have served under the command of a different DeLancey.

James DeLancey and his Westchester Refugees (Cowboys)

The Cowboys were so called because they specialized in stealing cattle to supply the British Army. Their leader, James DeLancey, part of a large landholding Westchester family prominent in politics, was the High Sheriff of the county from 1769 to 1776. In March of 1777, he led the local militia. Many men in the militia under DeLancey followed

him into his next venture. (If they joined the American militia instead, royal Governor Tryon put a $5 bounty on their heads as deserters).17 By that fall, DeLancey held the rank of colonel and had raised a regiment of dragoons, also called light horse18 -- both of which mean cavalry using lightweight horses bred for speed and agility.

The regiment, which also included infantry, was 500 men strong and mostly made up of Loyalists from his home county who had lost their homes. Either their lands had been confiscated or they had been violently chased out,19 but either way, they considered themselves refugees and I bet they were angry.

The Cowboys had several missions. They protected King's Bridge, the northern point of New York City, from attack or infiltration.20 They disrupted supply and communication routes, captured those with bounties on their heads from Governor Tryon, and assisted the regular army by acting as guides or adding to their numbers in combat.21 But I imagine elsewhere in the county, hearing hoofbeats heralding the arrival of armed men struck fear into the stomachs of common people just minding their own business. Their commander wasn't called the "Outlaw of the Bronx"22 for nothing.

Oil on canvas painting of James DeLancey, by John Durand, one of a few surviving paintings of a Loyalist officer in uniform done in America, https://www.americanrevolutioninstitute.org/asset/james-delancey-attributed-to-john-durand-ca-1778-1782

Imagine you are a Patriot, known or suspected. If a man, you are likely to be captured to use as exchange for British prisoners. Although the Cowboys were supposed to be hunting down deserters, and did, will you be able to convince them you are a lifelong local and not a runaway redcoat? You can expect to have your barn burned and possibly your house, while every supply you have not managed to hide is stolen. You can forget about keeping your cattle, because the Cowboys earned their name from their exceptional skill at stealing those.

If you are a Loyalist, you can breathe a sigh of relief that these hard-riding men are there to protect your family and home against the same types of raids that they carry out against Patriots. But since they wear their own clothes instead of uniforms, how can you tell who they are? Or if they are telling the truth? And doesn't their presence signal that the Continental militia are nearby and will soon be along to do their own plundering?23

The Westchester Refugees were known to be tough and effective or brutal, depending on who is telling the story. They fought in about forty engagements altogether, and were so dynamic that DeLancey's capture was near the top of Washington's wish list. Robert Benson, a member of the New York State Assembly, wrote of "the country (being) altogether open to the ravages of DeLancey's thieves..."24

A fan of James DeLancey wrote he "soon distinguished himself by his warmth and activity,"25 which could also be termed as he was soon infamous for the intensity of his attacks. Here follows a very romantic speech on DeLancey from an ardent admirer:

I extract the following notice of an affecting scene from a paper read before the New York Historical Society in 1861, by a Mr. McDonald. It describes this old Loyalist's leave-taking of his old home in the beautiful County of Westchester, the scene of his birth and his boyhood:

"The Outlaw of the Bronx," says this gentleman, "with a heavy heart, mounted his horse, and riding to the dwellings of his friends and neighbours bade them each farewell. His paternal fields and every object presented to his view were associated with the joyful recollections of early life. The consciousness that he beheld them for the last time, and the uncertainties to be encountered in a strange country to which banishment was consigning him, conspired to awaken emotions such as the sternest bosom is sometimes compelled to entertain. It was in vain that he struggled to suppress the feelings which shook his iron heart. Nature soon obtained the mastery and he burst into tears. After weeping with uncontrollable bitterness for a few moments he shook his ancient friend by the hand, ejaculating with difficulty the words, 'God bless you, Theophilus,' and spurring forward turned his back forever upon his native valley."

The emotion exhibited on this occasion, and the tears which he shed were noble proofs that he was a man of refined and cultivated mind, and that he possessed a heart capable of those amiable feelings which do so much honour to human nature.

Calnek, page 342

This "refined," "cultivated," and "amiable" man earned the nickname "Outlaw of the Bronx" by his actions. He doesn't seem amiable to me.

Massacre at Pines Bridge

Since Jeremiah enlisted in March 1781, I will describe a raid in which he likely took part in May that year that became known as the Massacre at Pines Bridge. A monument to the American soldiers killed there now stands at Yorktown Heights.26

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_PineBridge

The Refugees raided a Continental outpost on the Croton River, killed American Colonel Christopher Greene, may have chopped up his body and left him to die, and wounded, captured, and killed many other soldiers of his regiment, the First Rhode Island. Since the First Rhode Island was made up of black and Native American soldiers, racism could be a reason behind the viciousness.27 This supposition is supported by the future actions of Lt. Colonel DeLancey -- as a member of the Nova Scotia legislature, he tried to legalize slavery in that province, but his idea garnered no backers and failed.28

See addendum.

The Croton River was a strategic weak point for the Continentals. It formed the border between Westchester County and northern New York, but was shallow and easily forded in several places. General George Washington, concerned, tried to keep it guarded, but there were not enough soldiers to guard it permanently.29

A Fictional Look at Jeremiah's Actions in the Raid

Jeremiah expertly guides his horse 20 miles along the road with 100 other riders and even more marching men. His heart pounds and his legs feel shaky. He constantly scans what little he can see of the countryside in the pale light. In two months with the Cowboys, Jeremiah has patrolled roads and captured men out on their own who willingly surrendered to the fierce groups of dragoons. He has become adept at finding the few well-hidden cows left in Westchester. But he has never taken part in an actual battle, never attacked anyone or had to defend himself.

He turns to the rider closest to him. "What was it like?"

"What was what like?" the Cowboy asks.

The horseman ahead turns swiftly and points at them accusingly. They lapse into silence. There is nothing to hear but birdsong and the quietest possible hoofbeats.

At the Croton River bank, the Refugees stop to reconnoiter. They are divided into groups, and Jeremiah is glad to find himself with Captain Totten. Totten lives here, while Jeremiah has never traveled to this corner of the county farthest away from Rye.

Totten explains the plan. They will ford the river here, then ride directly across the fields to four houses. Totten's men will attack the Davenport House, which is Headquarters for American Colonel Greene. Intelligence tells them the river is but lightly guarded. Headquarters is likely guarded by Greene's First Rhode Island regiment. The plan is to attack quickly with the advantage of surprise, inflict damage, and get out.

They walk the horses across the river to avoid splashing. As the sun comes up in his eyes, all Jeremiah can see are the rumps of the horses ahead of him. He takes advantage of the slow walk to ready his musket, gripping it tightly to keep his hands from slipping.

"What if I die here?"

The thoughts are pushed from his mind by the sounds of quick gunshots. They are immediately answered by the guns of the Refugees, and Jeremiah hears his comrades shouting, "Kill! Kill! No quarter!"

All the horses are galloping now. Jeremiah bursts onto a wide lawn surrounding a grand white house. The image of his own home in Rye with its destroyed fields fills his brain.

"Why is my home a wreckage, yet their home still here, looking whole?"

Jeremiah spurs his horse forward. Seeing gunfire exchanged on the west side of the house, he careens to the east. White tents cluster on the lawn. Men emerge shooting. Jeremiah aims at a man and fires. He gives the horse its head while he reloads. Fires again. Ducks low to the horse's back. As they gallop around to the front of the house, Jeremiah is struck by an odd sight. His brain on overload, he cannot consider what it means.

The front porch is covered with blood and the floorboards with bloody men. Jeremiah stills his weapon. The shooting dies down. Two Refugees emerge carrying a barefoot, bareheaded man, bleeding profusely from his nightshirt. A horse and rider pull up to the porch. The two men awkwardly push the wounded man onto the saddle behind the rider. Jeremiah moves forward and steadies the man against the rider's back. The rider moves off at a trot. Jeremiah finds himself following.

"Slow down! He'll fall off!" Jeremiah shouts to the rider.

"No time! The rebels will be upon us!" the Cowboy yells back.

Jeremiah guides his horse to stay close by the wounded man. Refugees gallop past, but Jeremiah barely notices. His eyes focus on the man's ashen face and closed eyes. Blood is pouring from several jagged holes in his nightshirt. His limp bare legs bounce against the horse's flanks. Several times Jeremiah reaches out to prop him back up. The man makes no sound. He must be beyond pain.

As they move awkwardly along, scenes from the attack appear without bidding in Jeremiah's mind. The odd sight re-appears - Negroes and Indians emerging from the tents, shooting at him. Was it a nightmare?

Jeremiah is familiar with black men, free and enslaved, and has seen a few Indians. There were some blacks in Rye before the war, but in New York City there are thousands. Most live in shanties in the center of the city. Since the British offered freedom and protection to escaped slaves who would work for the Army, whole families made their way to the British lines. But they work as laborers, porters, laundresses. These men in the tents wore uniforms. They were armed. They shot. And they fought on the rebel side.

Most of the rebels Jeremiah knows regard anyone who is not white as something less than human. Why would they fight for someone like that? Especially when the British offer freedom and pay for work?

A mile and a half down the road, Jeremiah's thoughts are abruptly halted when the man suddenly buckles. Jeremiah grabs for him, but he falls completely off the other side and lands with a thump on the road. Both riders stop and dismount.

"Is he alive?" the Cowboy asks.

Jeremiah feels for breath. "Barely."

"He'll never make it to the city."

They carry the man off the road into the shade of a thicket of whortleberry bushes.

"Who is he?" Jeremiah asks.

"Colonel Greene."

"Their leader?" Jeremiah's eyes widen. "Why do we have him?"

"He asked for quarter, so we granted it. We cannot take him farther, tho."

Whortleberry or dwarf bilberry (Vaccinium myrtillus), https://wildfoodgirl.com/2023/huckleberries-billberries-whortleberries-grouseberries

"What to do?"

"Leave him here."

"Like this?"

"He's not long for this world. We, on the other hand, want long lives. We need to get out of here." The Refugee jumps on his horse and gallops down the road.

Jeremiah moves to mount his horse, then casts a look at Colonel Greene. He pauses. Swiftly looking up and down the road, Jeremiah pulls off his jacket, crumples it up, and gently places it under the head of the dying man. Then he jumps on his horse and gallops away.

Map from https://irvingtonhistoricalsociety.org/events/westchesters-revolutionary-war-places

A Factual Account of the Massacre

Lt. Col. James DeLancey, possibly in revenge for an attack on his home by Patriots, led 60 to 100 cavalry and 140 to 200 infantry (accounts differ) in a dawn assault30 on four homes used to house American soldiers a mile or so from Pines Bridge. The Richardson Davenport House quartered officers. Colonel Christopher Greene and Major Ebenezer Flagg dwelled in a large upstairs bedroom with several others. Lower-ranking soldiers lived in tents on the lawn.31

On the fateful night of May 13, Colonel Greene disastrously decided to leave the river crossings (fords and bridge) unguarded next day and went to bed. Altho on watch overnight, Greene's orders dismissed the guards at dawn.32 (not sure exactly how this came about). That unwise decision cost him his life. One of the Refugee leaders, Captain Totten, lived close by and knew the land intimately, as did many of his men;33 the Cowboys forded the river and attacked the homes.34

An unnamed roommate of Colonel Greene's, a lieutenant, saw the approaching raiders and fired at them from the bedroom window, drawing their attention.35 The Cowboys headed for the bedroom, shooting all the way. Colonel Greene jumped from bed and grabbed his weapons. Shouting "They're only cowboys!" to rally his men, he fought hand-to-hand from his bedroom to the top of the stairs, barefoot in his nightshirt. Greene was stabbed several times and shot.36 The Cowboys carried him out and put him on horseback behind a rider. However, Greene fainted from loss of blood and fell off the horse. The Cowboys laid him by some whortleberry bushes, still in his nightshirt, put a pillow under his head, and left him there to die.37 When Patriots found him later, they spread the rumor that his body had been hacked to pieces and scattered around the countryside.38

We are fortunate enough to have two first-hand accounts of the attack from Richardson Davenport's grandchildren.

Lydia Vail recorded this story in 1848:

> *"I was at Davenport's house a few minutes after the Refugees left...Greene, Flagg and a young Lieutenant whose name I do not remember, occupied a large room in the northwest corner of the second story...My grandfather was in the adjoining apartment, and overheard all the conversation of the three officers.*
>
> *"The rashness and folly of the young Lieutenant was the cause of the disaster, as my grandfather and his family always said;...The young Lieutenant always slept with a pair of loaded pistols upon a stand at the head of his bed, and when he heard the noise he sprang up, raised the window sash on the west side of the room and discharged both pistols at the enemy...who instantly cried out: 'Kill! Kill! No quarter!' Flagg then exclaimed aloud to the Lieutenant, calling him by name, '...you've undone us!' These were the last words he was ever to utter.*
>
> *"Green, half dressed, but sword in hand, said, 'We must sell our lives as dearly as we can.' And approaching the head of the stairs, called aloud to the soldiers below: 'Stand to your arms men! Courage! They are only a parcel of cow boys, fire away!' Flagg approached the window from which the Lieutenant had fired, and a volley was discharged at him. He fell pierced with five or six balls.*
>
> *"When I entered the house just after the Refugees had left, the young Lieutenant was lying dead at the door. He was the first one they killed on breaking in. Flagg, although desperately wounded, was yet alive and they dispatched him. Four or five were dead where the tents stood east of the house, besides many wounded...*
>
> *"The Refugees retired by the south road or path to the Crompond Road taking Green with them on horseback; near where the path or farm road comes into the highway. Greene, faint with the loss of blood, fell off. Finding that he was dying they placed him in a spot surrounded by whortleberry bushes, and putting something under his head for support, left him in that state to finish his days alone. Here he bled to death, and was found soon after with no clothing on but his shirt and drawers.*

> *"Two negro servants and my father were wounded, one in the arm and the others in the shoulder...The disaster happened a little before sunrise...I lived at my father's half a mile off, northerly on the Crompond Road; word came to us that they were all cut off and killed at head-quarters, and we all ran through the fields to Davenport's house...found the floors and walls covered with the blood of the dead, wounded and dying..."39*

Joshua Carpenter, born six years after the massacre, heard this story from his grandfather:

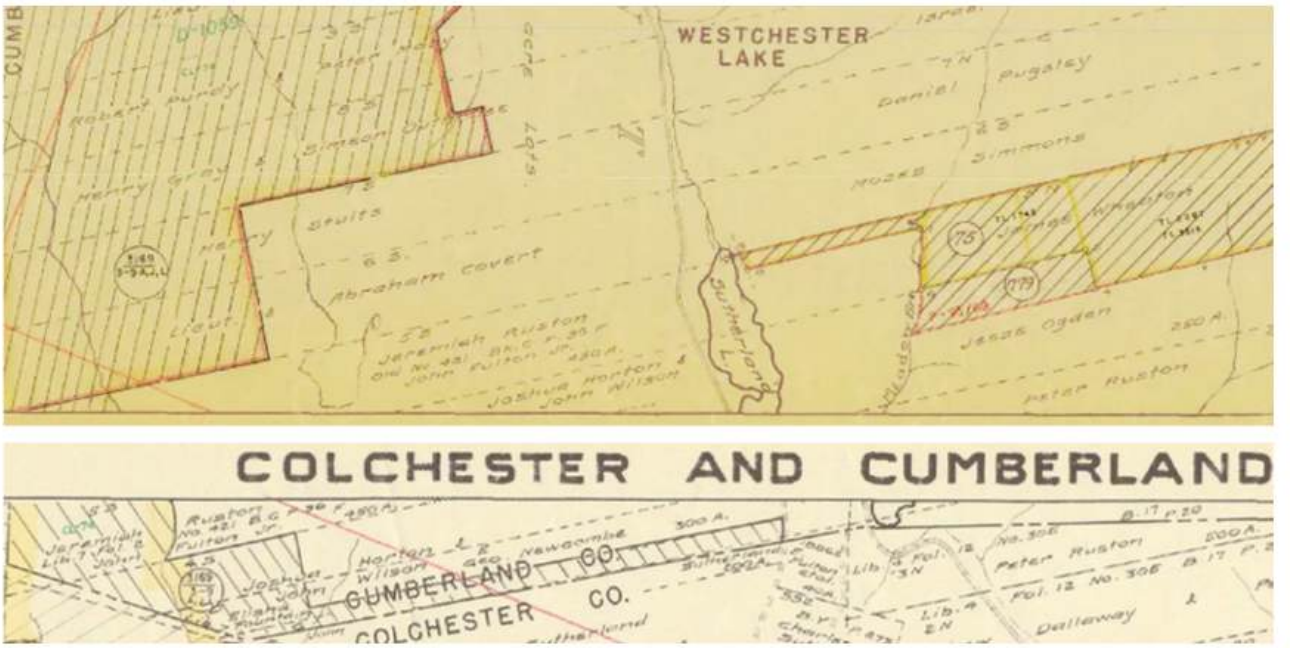
> *"The Refugees got to the house unperceived coming up from the west side where only a single sentinel who did not see them until near but who then fired. Some soldiers asleep on the south side stoop also fired. Greene and Flagg sprang up. The former encouraged the soldiers to defend themselves saying: 'They are only a few cowboys, fire away boys, fire.' Flagg advanced to the west window a pistol in each hand. He was answered by a volley and fell pierced by several balls.*
>
> *"The Refugees at the same time burst in the north door thus making a cross fire. Fifty six bullet holes remain. Greene met the enemy at the north door and attempted defense sword in hand. He struck at Totten foremost with all his might and would have killed him but the blows were parried by a Refugee.*
>
> *"Totten was stunned and wounded. Greene received several shots and was hacked with sabers. He then asked for and was given quarter. He then asked for parole. This was refused. They said that he must go to Morrisiania and mounted him behind a dragoon. He fell off one and one half miles down the hill a little north of Griffen's where he was left by the road."40*

After the War

Colonel DeLancey resigned his commission in April 1783 and sailed for England.41 I surmise this would be about the same time that Jeremiah left a disbanded corps; he and Sarah made plans to take up King George's offer of land in Nova Scotia. DeLancey later joined other Loyalists there, altho not in the same location -- I think that as a wealthy officer, he got the prime farmland in Annapolis,42 while the rest of the Refugees settled together in the Cobequid Mountains.

Jeremiah signed a "Memorial of New York Loyalists" to His Excellency Sir Guy Carleton, the general in charge of Britain's surrender. It read: the memorialists have "been deprived of very valuable Landed Estates," and were "obliged to abandon their possessions in this City on Account of their Loyalty to their Sovereign and Attachment to British Constitution and seeing no prospect of their being reinstated had determined to remove w their Families and settle in His Majestys Province of NS..."43

After the war, Jeremiah petitioned for reimbursement for a salary and two horses and clothes he provided himself. His petition was rejected.44 This evidence points strongly to his serving under Lieutenant Colonel James DeLancey's Cowboys -- they were not paid or given uniforms, so Jeremiah had no right to expect any.



Jeremiah and Sarah's land between two Crown Land Grant maps, numbers 71 and 70, https://novascotia.ca/natr/land/grantmap.asp. His brother Peter Rus(h)ton's land is to the east.

Despite some logistical snafus, the Westchester Refugees got their land grants in Nova Scotia. Jeremiah and Sarah were granted 500 acres along the Cobequid Road to London-Derry in Cumberland County.45 They raised crops and children - five more sons and two daughters. My 3rd great-grandfather, Isaac Rushton, was their first child born in their new country. The Refugees named their new home Westchester.

Addendum:

> *The First Rhode Island is the only non-white American regiment I am aware of. A few free blacks and Indians had joined the Continental Army, and some slaves were sold to the Army by slave-owning Patriots. But Washington did not trust this arrangement and sent them away. After the British Army promised freedom to escaped slaves who could reach their lines, Washington felt forced to take blacks and Native Americans and promise freedom to slaves. In this way the First Rhode Island was formed. However, Rhode Island slaveowners were against it, even tho they were paid for their slaves, and the program only lasted about four months. The agreement with the Rhode Island soldiers was honored, and between 130 and 180 slaves earned their freedom.46 This contrasts with the 20,000 slaves who earned their freedom by allying with the British.47*

FOOTNOTES

1. *"James DeLancey Attributed to John Durand ca. 1778-1782." Society of the Cincinnati. https://www.americanrevolutioninstitute.org/asset/james-delancey-attributed-to-john-durand-ca-1778-1782/#:~:text=By%20the%20fall%2C%20Colonel%20DeLancey,their%20property%20confiscated%20by%20patriots. Accessed January 2026.*

2. *Kelby, William, 1841-1898. De Lancey's Brigade (Loyalist) 1776-1778. Orderly book of the three battalions of loyalists, commanded by Brigadier-General Oliver De Lancey, 1776-1778: to which is appended a list of New York loyalists in the city of New York during the war of the revolution. 1917. https://archive.org/details/orderlybookofthr00delarich/page/118/mode/2up. Accessed January 2026.*

3. *As far as I can determine, both were called Westchester Refugees. The "Cowboys" were thieves. Here, I use both names interchangeably. "James DeLancey Attributed to John Durand."*

4. *Coldham, Peter Wilson. American Migrations 1765-1799: The lives, times, and families of colonial Americans who remained loyal to the British Crown before, during and after the Revolutionary War, as related in their own words and through their correspondence. Baltimore, MD, USA: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2000. p. 330. Rushton, Jeremiah Memorial. Cumberland 1786. He served with the Westchester Refugees from March 1781 until he left NY in 1783; he received no pay. Claim for two horses; clothing. Rejected. (13/26/429-430).*

5. *"A Brief History: 1600 to Today." Rye Historical Society. https://www.ryehistory.org/brief-history. Accessed January 2026.*

6. *Will of Hanness Coon, proved 1773. Record of Wills, 1665-1916; Index to Wills, 1662-1923 (New York County); Author: New York. Surrogate's Court (New York County); Probate Place: New York, New York. Accessed thru Ancestry.com.*

7. *Burns, Brendan S. The Loyal and Doubtful, Index to the Acts of British Loyalism in the Greater New York and Long Island Area, Vol. 4. 2023. Rushton, Jeremiah. Oath of Fidelity to King George 1777.*

8. *Rye Historical Society.*

   8A. Harrison, Sandra. Sandy's Written Creations. Rye, New York. 12 July 2021. https://sandraharrison1954.com/2021/07/12/rye-new-york/. Accessed January 2026.

9. *Rye Historical Society.*

   9A. Dawson, Henry B. Westchester County, New York, during the American Revolution. 1886. Accessed thru Ancestry.com.

   9B. Harrison

10. *Rye Historical Society*

    10A. Harrison

11. *"The Revolutionary War 'Neutral Ground' of Westchester County, New York." National Park Service. https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/the-revolutionary-war-neutral-ground-of-westchester-county-new-york.htm. Accessed January 2026.*

12. *Flick, Alexander Clarence. Loyalism in New York during the American Revolution. Columbia University Press. 1901. Accessed at Provincial Archives of New Brunswick. https://archives2.gnb.ca/exhibits/forthavoc/html/NYLoyalism.aspx?culture=en-CA#linkSouth. Accessed January 2026.*

13. *Burns.*

14. *Jeremiah, father John, and brother Peter got 500-acre land grants in 1785 on the main Cobequid Road; brother John Jr. got only 250 acres in a different place, Ramsheg. Gilroy, Marion, compiled by, Loyalists and Land Settlement in Nova Scotia, Cumberland County Grants, Public Archives of Nova Scotia.*

15. *Rushton, Abraham. Death Record. 1870. Cumberland Vital Records. Public Archives of Nova Scotia. Image 544 of 775. Accessed January 2026.*

16. *Coldham.*

17. *Calnek, William Arthur, and Alfred William Savary. History of the County of Annapolis, including old Port Royal and Acadia (microform): with memoirs of its representatives in the provincial parliament: and biographical and genealogical sketches: of its early English settlers and their families. 1897. pp 341-342. https://archive.org/details/cihm_00386/page/341/mode/1up. Accessed January 2026.*

    16A. Moody, Barry M. DELANCEY, JAMES in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol.5, University of Toronto, 1983, https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/delancey_james_5E.html. Accessed January 2026.

    16B. DiSanto, Victor J. "The First Rhode Island Regiment and the Pines Bridge Monument." Journal of the American Revolution. 22 February 2024. https://allthingsliberty.com/2024/02/the-first-rhode-island-regiment-and-the-pines-bridge-monument/). Accessed January 2026.

18. *James DeLancey Attributed to John Durand.*
    17 A Calnek.

19. *James DeLancey Attributed to John Durand.*

20. *Ibid.*

21. *DiSanto, Victor J. from: Hufeland, Westchester County During the Revolution, 324, 379; John Lockwood Romer, Historical Sketches of the Romer, Van Tassell, and Allied Families, and Tales of the Neutral Ground (Buffalo: W.C. Kay Publishing Company, 1917), 46-47, 53 and 93; Lincoln Diamont, Yankee Doodle Days (Fleishmanns: Purple Mountain Press, 1996), 116-117; Robert Howe to Washington, July 8, 1780, founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-27-02-0028; Barnett Schecter, The Battle for New York (New York: Walker and Company, 2002), 350; Sy Shepard, Patriot vs. Loyalist (New York: Osprey Publishing, 2022), 34.*

22. *Calnek.*
    21 A. Moody.

23. *James DeLancey Attributed to John Durand.*

24. *Virgintino, Mike. Revolutionary War Massacre at Pines Bridge Part I. 2017. https://classicnewyorkhistory.com/revolutionary-war-massacre-at-pines-bridge-part-i/. Accessed January 2026.*

23 A. James DeLancey Attributed to John Durand.

23 B. Moody.

25. *Calnek, p. 341.*

26. *DiSanto.*

27. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Americans_in_the_Revolutionary_War.*

28. *Moody.*

29. *Virgintino, Part I.*

30. *British accounts give the larger number. Virgintino, Mike. Revolutionary War Massacre at Pines Bridge Part II. 2017. https://classicnewyorkhistory.com/revolutionary-war-massacre-at-pines-bridge-part-ii-davenport-house/. Accessed January 2026.*

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Virgintino Part II.*
31A. MacCallum, Ken. Comment on DiSanto. 8 March 2024. Accessed January 2026.

33. *MacCallum.*

34. *Virgintino Part II.*

35. *Vail, Lydia in Virgintino Part II.*

36. *Carpenter, Joshua in Virgintino Part II.*

37. *DiSanto.*
- *A. Virgintino Part II.*

38. *DiSanto.*

39. *Grandchild quotes from Virgintino, Mike. Part II.*

40. *Ibid.*

41. *James DeLancey Attributed to John Durand.*
- *A. Moody*

42. *James DeLancey Attributed to John Durand.*

43. *The memorialists were alarmed that an application of 55 persons requesting tract of 275,000 acres was 'terminated" and expressed disappointment that " they find themselves in being left to the lenity of their enemys on the dubious recommendation of their Leaders they yet hoped to find an Asylum under British protection..." Gilroy, Appendix B, p. 149.*

44. *Coldham.*

45. *Gilroy.*

46. *DiSanto.*

47. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Americans_in_the_Revolutionary_War*

Article shared from https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/revolutionary-war-cowboy

Copyright 2026 Anne Wendel

TAD CALLIN

1756–1844

Tad Callin has been researching his family since the late 1990s and started his genealogy-only blog in 2007. He's carried that "Mightier Acorns" name through several platforms. He now blogs at https://mightieracorns.com

SCAN ME

ORPHAN BOY, CONTINENTAL OFFICER, LANDED GENTRY

Wavetops: James McCullough (Sr.)

When John McCullough died in 1766, he left four orphans without family or support in Rowan County, North Carolina. The courts bound each child to an apprenticeship, each with different terms.

> *"II:679. 16 Jan. 1767. Orderd P Cur that JAMES McCULLOH Orphant Child of JOHN McCULLOH Decd Be Bound to JAMES SMILEY to larn him the Art, & mistery of a Weaver he being Aged 9 1/2 Years Old & that he Sarve his sd Master till he Arive to the Age 21 Years & to Give, him at the Experation of his sd Time a Loome & Tackling to the Value of 4 pounds [symbol] in Money & to Comply with an Act of Assembly in Such Cases Made & Provided &c"*

In her 1991 Ph.D. dissertation, Johanna Lewis1 noted that of 52 orphans placed as apprentices before 1770, only one (a Martin Basinger) completed his apprenticeship and remained in Rowan County working as a hatter. Based on his age in Jan 1767, James would have turned 21 in 1778, but in the fall of 1775, one of the few things that could release an apprentice from his bond presented itself, and James enlisted in the North Carolina Line under Col. Martin's Regiment.

Becoming Lieutenant McCullough of Kentucky

James McCullough (1757-1838) enlisted as a private from Rowan County in Col. Martin's Regiment - most likely referring to the 2nd North Carolina Regiment - serving 9 months beginning in the fall of 1775, and his record placed him in the 1776 Battle of Sullivan's Island, soon after which, his enlistment expired. He re-enlisted for three more terms in 1777 and 1778; in the spring of 1778, James moved to Kentucky County, Virginia.

In Kentucky, James signed up under Capt. William Smith's company to guard some families moving to Kentucky, and he continued with them until they reached Harrodsburg. From Harrodsburg, the company marched to Logan Station, where modern-day Stanford now stands, and during that tour, James was wounded in a confrontation with Indians. When he recovered, he was employed as an Indian Spy until he was ordered into service in the militia of the State of Virginia at Harrodsburg in May 1779.

At the time, Kentucky was known as Kentucky County, Virginia. In 1780 it was divided into Lincoln, Jefferson, and Fayette Counties. In 1785, the part of Lincoln County around Harrodsburg became Mercer County. In 1792 Kentucky separated from Virginia.

From May 1779, he was a Lieutenant in Capt. McGary's Company of Col. Bowman's Regiment, and served during an expedition against Indians on the Little Miami. His unit was in the Battle of Blue Licks on 19 August 1782, and his name is included on the monument at the Blue Licks Battlefield State Park near Mount Olivet.

Born in Rowan County; traveled to Harrodsburg, settled in Mount Sterling. Red pin indicates location of Battle of Blue Licks, near Maysville.

Landowner in Mercer County, KY

In 1794, James McCullough was on the Mercer County Tax List, with horses, cattle, and 300 acres of land in Green County. He bought 50 acres on the waters of Shawnee Run from Simeon Moore, out of Moore's 1000-acre survey.

In May 1776, Simeon Moore had come down the Ohio River with nine other men and traveled up the Kentucky River landing at a place they

named Harrod's Landing. The group surveyed the land and built ten improvements, then drew lots. Simeon Moore received the 1000-acre tract in what later became Mercer County.

Simeon had three sons - Samuel, John, and Thomas - and by the time he made his will, his wife Mary, son Samuel, and daughter Drusilla were all deceased. He left $5 to the heirs of Samuel and $5 to the heirs of his daughter "Drusy" who was married to James McCullough.

James and Drusilla had seven children, and their youngest son was James McCullough, Jr.:

- **Wavetops: James McCullough, Jr. (1804-1864)**
  https://mightieracorns.substack.com/p/wavetops-james-mccullough-jr-1804

After Drusilla's death, James married Eleanor in about 1804 and moved his family from Mercer County to Mount Sterling, Montgomery County, Kentucky. They had six more children.

> *"James evidently made a very good living for his family in Montgomery County. When he wrote his will in 1834, he was holding notes on several men and had loaned money to his sons, quite different from his Harrodsburg days - when he was the borrower. His will was a lengthy one as he tried to divide his assets equally among his children and he set everything out in detail. He was probably a strict parent, but a kind one, too. He visited his sons, Simeon and James, Jr., in Rush County, Indiana, (see p 6) about 1835 so he kept up with all of his family. He made a Codicil to his will in 1836, making a few changes and additions. James died in 1838."2*

Article shared from https://mightieracorns.substack.com/p/orphan-boy-continental-officer-landed

SCAN ME

Wavetop sighting

IFrom this point, available information is sketchy, but the Maxcy book does give us some information about James Sr.'s ancestors. Next time, I'll talk a bit more about what is in that book, and see what we can reliably say about them with evidence from available records.

Copyright 2026 Tad Callin

If you're a McCullough cousin, say hello!

FOOTNOTES

1. *Lewis, Johanna Carlson Miller, "Artisans in the Carolina backcountry: Rowan County, 1753-1770" (1991). Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects. Paper 1539623804. https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-3kw4-kw88*

2. *Maxcy, Mabel E, McSween, Jimmie D.; James McCullough and Descendants, A Family History; 1991, Penny Press, Inc., Denton-Fort Worth-Arlington, Texas, U.S.A.*

"Retreat of the British from Concord" *After a painting by Alonzo Chappel. Engraved by James Smillie. Published by Johnson Fry & Co. New York. Just after midnight on April 19, 1776, Paul Revere road through the town of Menotomy in today's Arlington, Massachusetts, warning of the coming British troops. The battles that day would go down as both the start of the war and an indication of how the British had underestimated the colonial's resolve. Learn more: https://www.teachushistory.org/node/253*

Credit: *In the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration, cataloged under the National Archives Identifier (NAID): 518209 Local ID: 66-G-5-35 Photographs and other Graphic Materials*

DEBORAH CARL

Deborah blogs from https://YourFamilyQuest.com and her Substack publication of the same name. She also edits the Tips blog for https://MissionGenealogy.org.

SCAN ME

1757–1844

WE DON'T BELIEVE YOU

Abel Patrick's Revolutionary War Pension was denied as he didn't have proof he'd served six months. #Stories250

"The only actual service which can be recognized as having been performed by him was that for two months in 1779."1

On 7 June 1832, Congress passed an act that lowered the pension eligibility to at least six months of service and allowed militia members to qualify. Abel Patrick was suffering from palsy ("loss of energy, loss of the power of performing regular functions") and was unable to appear before the Court in 1834 to testify to his service. So the Court sent a representative to Abel's home to take his statement.2

Abel Patrick testified he was born on 15 April 1757 at Norwalk, Fairfield, Connecticut. On 1 March 1776, he enlisted "in Captain Nathan Burrills Company of State Troops, at Norwalk aforesaid in Connecticut for a term of nine months...that after the time of his enlistment had expired he was discharged, verbally, and returned home." He'd been stationed at Saugatuck and didn't see any action.3

He enlisted again in 1777 and served for six months at Fishkill, New York, guarding the mountain pass to the south and the supplies for the northern division of the Continental Army. He was again verbally discharged at the end of his service and returned home.4

It appears he had had enough of military service, and probably in early 1779, he married Elizabeth Hurlburt. Connecticut, however, felt he needed to serve more, and Abel reported that the state drafted him around 1 August 1779 for a period of nine months. Abel probably didn't know it at the time, but Elizabeth was pregnant. She gave birth to their first child about eight months later.5

The Brett homestead was used as officers' barracks and "famous leaders like George Washington, the Marquis de La Fayette, and Baron von Steuben are said to have visited the house." In 1800 the house was remodeled and becaume a boarding house. "Madam Brett Homestead Facts for Kids," Kiddle. Also, The Teller house, Fishkill-on-Hudson, N.Y. (Detroit Publishing Co., between 1900 and 1910), photograph; Library of Congress. Colorized at MyHeritage.

Abel was stationed in Middlesex, performing guard duty—again—on the Connecticut side of Long Island Sound. He testified that sometime in October he was captured by the British while on guard duty and imprisoned on Long Island until he escaped about six months later and returned home.6

Militia records were usually incomplete, and Abel needed a witness to corroborate his story.

The State of Connecticut reported there was no record of an officer named Nathan Burrell and that no state troops had been stationed at

Map data ©2026 Google.

Norwalk in 1776. (No mention was made of the 1777 service.) While 4,000 militia were ordered on 2 August 1779 to defend the seacoast and report to their stations on 20 August, the service was for two months. "There are no pay rolls in this office, after 1775, and no record by which it can be ascertained the names of the privates in service, the day they entered or were discharged."7

Isaac Fillow testified that he and Abel were in the same company at the same time and swore that Abel Patrick had served in the Coast Guards at Norwalk and had been taken prisoner in 1779. It was not enough. Abel Patrick was recognized as having served two months, which did not meet the requirements to qualify for a pension. His request was rejected.8

Abel did not pursue the matter further. However, after his death, his heirs contacted the War Department Pension Office and were told that Abel could not have been taken prisoner and held on Long Island. "There were no prisoners kept on that Island, and although he may have been taken a prisoner, he could not have been detained as such for so long a time as four months."9

FOOTNOTES

1. *Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files, Pate, Matthew–Pattee, Richard, file 7995, Abel Patrick, letter from the United States War Department, Pennsylvania Office to H. B. Wright, 4 March 1835; FamilySearch.*

2. *"Revolutionary War Veteran and Widow Pensions," updated 8 August 2023; National Park Service. Also, Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files, Pate, Matthew–Pattee, Richard, file 7995, Abel Patrick, declaration of Abel Patrick in order to obtain a pension under the 1832 act of Congress, 4 June 1834; FamilySearch.*

3. *Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files, Pate, Matthew–Pattee, Richard, file 7995, Abel Patrick, declaration of Abel Patrick in order to obtain a pension under the 1832 act of Congress, 4 June 1834; FamilySearch.*

4. *Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files, Pate, Matthew–Pattee, Richard, file 7995, Abel Patrick, declaration of Abel Patrick in order to obtain a pension under the 1832 act of Congress, 4 June 1834; FamilySearch. Also, Robert Buccheri, "Town History;" Town of Fishkill, New York.*

5. *Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files, Pate, Matthew–Pattee, Richard, file 7995, Abel Patrick, declaration of Abel Patrick in order to obtain a pension under the 1832 act of Congress, 4 June 1834; FamilySearch.*

6. *Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files, Pate, Matthew–Pattee, Richard, file 7995, Abel Patrick, declaration of Abel Patrick in order to obtain a pension under the 1832 act of Congress, 4 June 1834; FamilySearch.*

7. Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files, Pate, Matthew–Pattee, Richard, file 7995, Abel Patrick, declaration of Abel Patrick in order to obtain a pension under the 1832 act of Congress, 4 June 1834 & affidavit of Wm J. Ross, Associate Judge that Abel Patrick and his witnesses were credible persons, 4 June 1834 & letter from State of Connecticut Comptroller's Office to H. B. Wright, Esq., 18 October 1834; FamilySearch.

8. Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files, Pate, Matthew–Pattee, Richard, file 7995, Abel Patrick, affidavit of Isaac Fillows who served with Abel Patrick in Norwalk, Connecticut, 25 January 1834 & rejection of pension request; FamilySearch.

9. Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files, Pate, Matthew–Pattee, Richard, file 7995, Abel Patrick, letter from the United States War Department, Pennsylvania Office to H. B. Wright, 4 March 1835; FamilySearch.

Article shared from https://yourfamilyquest.substack.com/p/we-dont-believe-you

Copyright 2026 Deborah Carl

ANNE WENDEL

1758–1836

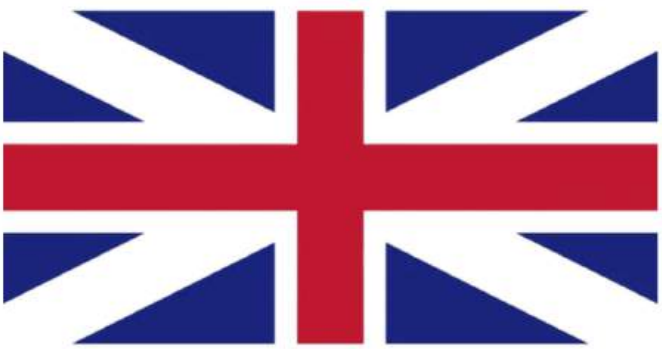
THE MAP OUR ANCESTORS FORGOT

An extraordinary discovery of our place in time - Stories 250

Anne blogs at Grandma's Granny's Family Album https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com This piece was part of Genealogy Matters Storyteller Tuesday Challenge: MAP MEMORY.

SCAN ME

In the US, siding with England in the Revolutionary War makes you at best a loser and at worst a traitor. But in Canada, being a United Empire Loyalist is a badge of honor. If you can prove your descent from one, you can apply for a lineage society, earning the right to put UE after your name and on your license plate.1



United Empire Loyalist flag, from the flag in use at the time of the Revolutionary War but wider, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Empire_Loyalist

The town of Shelburne, Nova Scotia, where we visited my grandfather's family most summers, was the setting for my first genealogy discoveries.

https://gisgeography.com/nova-scotia-map/

Shelburne has a tourism economy based on the town's founding in 1783. At the entrance, a large sign flanked by a redcoated colonist, ripe for photo ops, proclaims that Shelburne was founded by United Empire Loyalists. After one childhood photo op, I asked my mother's cousin Doris if our family were UE Loyalists. She said she didn't know. At age 8, I decided that someday when I was old enough, I would find out.

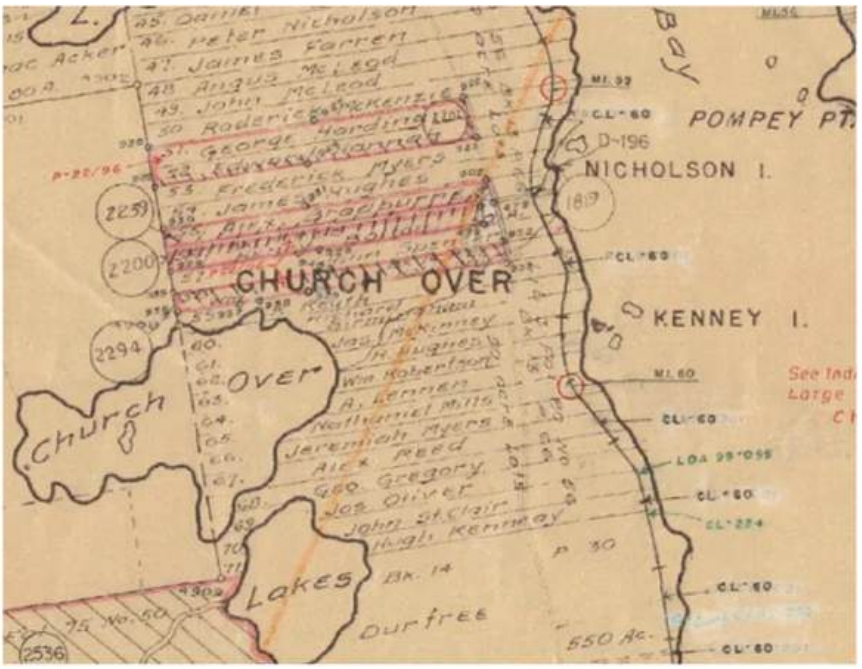
The Shelburne County Archives has since moved to Barrington, NS, Google Maps

I was still a kid, age 14, when I found out. It's decades later now, but the memory of amazement still fills my body and makes the tears fizz. In my fertile teenage imagination, like Indiana Jones following clues to an ancient treasure, I solved the riddle that made an old wooden door creak open to let the billowing mist out. I extended my warm living arm into the unknown, and one at a time, people clasped my hand and emerged, wearing odd clothes and bearing unusual names. Even though they spoke with a different accent, they looked like me. They recognized me and greeted me: "How now? What cheer?"

Shelburne is big on genealogy as well as history, and that Society had several helpful researchers working with plenty of records in their rooms above the brick firehouse. I headed there with a purpose: discovering if we were Loyalists.

Me with my mother's cousin Doris Robertson, 1972.

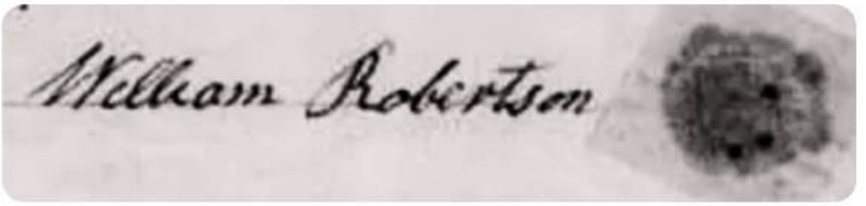
Here, on Nova Scotia's impressive Crown Land Grant compilation map, is our name. Robertson.



Nova Scotia Crown Land Grant Map, a compilation of grants from about 1783-1830. Kenney Island is just north of Wm. Robertson's land grant. Crown Land Information Management Centre, https://novascotia.ca/natr/land/grantmap.asp

Me at age 14 with two of the ancestors I discovered who had been unknown to the rest of the family

So I have been researching William Robertson, land grantee, ever since I was 14. But both Robertson and William are common names and Shelburne had 30,000 Loyalist inhabitants. There were at least two William Robertsons, one a shoemaker and the other a gentleman. William the shoemaker and his wife Jane lived on the west side of Shelburne Harbour, where the land grant is, whereas the gentleman lived in town.2



William the shoemaker's signature on his will, https://archives.novascotia.ca/probate-records/

I have learned more about their lives in the last 40 years, but no answer to the burning question, where were they from and what did they do for King George to get 50 acres of property? You see, after the American Revolution was over, there were thousands of people who had remained loyal to England and were now in danger, now that they were on the losing side. King George III, nice guy that he was, offered them land in his other colonies. General Sir Guy Carleton, even nicer guy, arranged for 50,000 Loyalists, including 10,000 former slaves, living all throughout the new United States, to come to New York City. Then he arranged 36,000 of them transport to Shelburne, Nova Scotia. Shelburne was supposed to become the new capital. It had the best harbor on the east coast, and for a while, it was the 5th most populated city in North America, after Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Charleston.3

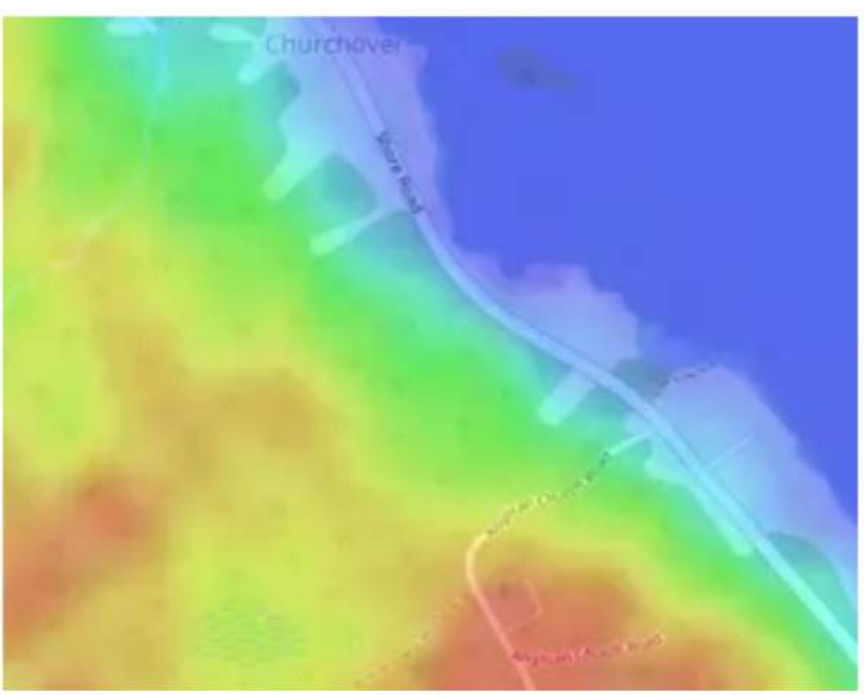
Never heard of Shelburne, you say? That gives you an idea of how well the plan went. The distribution logistics were really messed up. Most grantees realized the land was infertile and sold up and left, and the others just gave up and left, within just a few years.

Jane and William were 31 and 26 when they got their grant. Were they already married with children? Or did they meet after they arrived? I don't know. After their arrival, they went on to have 7 children: Agnes, Eleanor, Ann, James B., twins Elizabeth and Margaret, and John R.

William the shoemaker was fairly well educated, by which I mean literate. He was considered a yeoman, a social class distinction that meant a farmer who owned his own land, a middle class status a man could be proud of. He could sign his name, no easy feat in the days of quill pens, and he had several books, albeit old ones, worth 8 shillings when he died. (His appraisers, maybe not as educated, weren't interested in naming the book titles.) His son John, on the other hand, was unable to write his name and signed with his mark. A consequence of living in the country, or bad economic times with no tax money for schools?

A typical section of the land grant today

I can imagine him plying his trade in Shelburne, which he would have reached by crossing the harbor. Making shoes at home and carrying them across to sell? Clearing the land to build and till would require felling trees and removing rocks. The government provided wheat, blankets, and an ax the first year, and half rations the second. Maybe they spent their first summer in a tent, and built a cabin for the winter. There was certainly enough wood, enough rocks for a sturdy foundation and chimney, and enough slope for a cellar. The land slopes downward to the harbor fairly steeply, not leaving very much flat ground for living or growing.



Here is a topographic map of the land grant. Ignore the roads; they weren't there then. The land grant is a thin rectangle. https://geonova.novascotia.ca/base-mapping

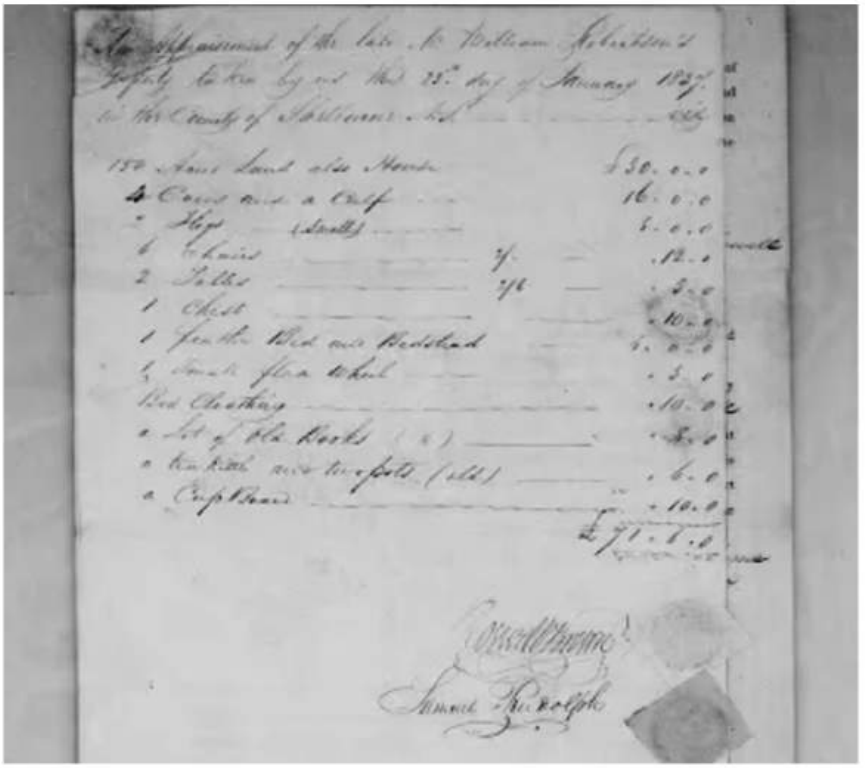
It starts at approximately the D in Shore Road and is about the width of the word Road. It meets the shore at the indent of the water next to the word Shore Road. Now go all the way diagonally to the bottom left. You can see it goes from pale purple to turquoise to pale green to green pretty quickly, and then to yellow to orange to red. That's the elevation. From sea level to 49 feet to 62 to 75 to 85 quickly. Then a little bit of 138 feet to a large amount of 157 feet to another big section of 174 feet. It eventually ends at North Churchover Lake, which is at that high elevation. It has a nice fast-running brook, but other than that, how would you farm on such a slope? Or build your house?

30 years later, Jane and William had a dwelling and 4 acres under cultivation. The 4 acres produced 2 bushels of grain, 3 tons of hay, and 100 bushels of potatoes, clearly the main crop. What can you do with only 2 bushels of grain (not wheat)? 3 tons of hay would probably feed the 4 horned cattle, 3 swine, and 1 sheep that they had. Maybe they did a little spinning and weaving with the sheep's wool. Without a horse, maybe they tilled the earth with oxen (included in the horned cattle?), and certainly traveled by boat.5

By 1827, Jane had died, the daughters were married I think, their son James and family lived next door, and William was living in their dwelling with their son John and his family. John had a wife Catharine, a little girl Elizabeth Eleanor, and a newborn baby William. Also living with them was William's daughter Elizabeth (I am almost certain) and another man. That man was probably either her husband Joseph Ellis or John's oldest brother, also named William.6 Elizabeth was only 36, but she was blind.

William died 19 December 1836. By this time he had acquired 150 acres. He left his son John an estate worth 71 pounds 6 shillings:

- 150 acres Land also House ....worth 50 pounds
- 4 Cows and a Calf....16 pounds
- 2 Hogs (small)....5 pounds
- 6 chairs....12 shillings
- 2 tables....5 shillings
- 1 chest....10 shillings
- 1 feather Bed and Bedstead....1 pound
- 1 small flax wheel....5 shillings
- Bed Cloathing....10 shillings
- a Lot of Old Books (8)....8 shillings
- a tea kettle and two pots (old)....6 shillings
- a CupBoard....10 shillings



Page from William's will, https://archives.novascotia.ca/probate-records

There was one stipulation: John had to take care of his blind sister Elizabeth, who was currently living with William. Elizabeth got a cow.7

Ok, so William and Jane had 2 sons, James and John, and they left John their 150 acres. Again, very common names. Are they going to connect to me somehow?

As it happens, my grandfather's grandfather was named John Robertson. Such a common name, but...so many people had left Shelburne that it resembled a ghost town at times, with grass growing in the streets and wild pigs living in unused houses.8 How many John Robertsons were there likely to be? When I found a J. Robinson, I wondered. Could he be the missing link, spelled wrong?

The find was on a map by A. F. Church from about 1870. I love this man and the government who hired him to map the entire province. Being the government, of course, they argued over price, and they didn't always have the tax money to pay him. So the process took over 20 years. It is said that Mr. Church would arrive in a town and ask the inhabitants who lived where. Sometimes he would go to the school and ask the students. So there are lots of errors.9 Even better for my case.

A. F. Church map, about 1870.

J. Robinson and J. Robinson, west of the Y of the word Birchtown Bay, sure look like they live on the land grant, judging by the shoreline. That would be William and Jane's sons, James and John Robertson, name misspelled. One house is by the road, and the other is by the water. Note how close it is to the water. Kenney Island is not pictured.

Our place in time. Our spot, in history. Our location, across ages.

Me at my grandfather's birthplace in 1972

In my childhood trips to Shelburne, we would visit my grandfather's birthplace down the road. The old house had been torn down to put the new road thru. This picture is of me at age 8 by my grandfather's grandmother's apple orchard where our ancestors had buried each other, vegetation too thick to see anything.

In 1921, visiting the house where my grandfather was born: from left, my grandfather Joe Robertson with son Frank, his father Joe Robertson with my mother Anne, his mother Ann Acker Robertson with dog, unknown man with Joe's son Joseph Jr., Joe's brother Havelock Robertson.

My cousin Fred owns a small plane and had flown over Shelburne years ago to view the land grant, but he didn't really know where it was. So I went to the Genealogical Society to find out. The researcher compared the current property tax map to the land grant map.

There was the curve in the shoreline. There was Kenney Island. There was the point of land a little farther down.

"That's great!" I said. "By the way, my grandfather was born on a piece of property around here; my cousin Joe still owns it. Can you show me where that is?"

Me with my mother's cousins Ellis and Harry Robertson at our parents'/grandparents' birthplace, torn down to put the road thru, 1972. Harry in middle is walking on the railroad track. Note Kenney Island in the background and the closeness to the water.

Same property, present day; note the closeness of the water and the point of land on right

"It's the same piece of land," she said.

It's the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War. William and Jane Robertson were granted land. We still have it????

I called Cousin Joe. "Do you know that your land has been in our family since the Revolution?" He did not.

My great-grandmother Ann Acker Robertson with her grandson Bob Robertson and unknown women, 1920s, on her property; note the closeness of the water and the point of land on right.

"It's the same piece of land," she said.

It's the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War. William and Jane Robertson were granted land. We still have it????

I called Cousin Joe. "Do you know that your land has been in our family since the Revolution?" He did not.

Property tax maps are not accessible to the public, but our land grant is at the word "Shore." Note Kenney Island to the north. This Shore Road is a lot closer to the harbor than the previous road, cutting through properties. The 1920 house stood where the road is now. Note how close it is to the water. The green line used to be a railroad and is now a trail. Google Maps

After that bombshell, Cousin Fred and I undeniably needed to walk the land grant, now that we knew where it was. We chose April with its long hours of early spring daylight, but temperatures still cold enough so the vegetation that had kept me out of Great-Great-Grandmother's apple orchard graveyard hadn't yet started to grow. We traced a foundation of cut stone (James Robertson was a stonemason). We found rusty artifacts — giant door hinges. The 2-level foundation, plus the door hinges fit for a barn, plus the picture of Aunt Marion below, proved we had found the barn. Odd slices of stone, stuck in the ground within a low stone wall, suggested graves in a small family cemetery.

Marion, wife of my grandfather's brother Havelock Robertson, in 1924 by big doors proving it's the barn. Note the cut stone foundation and 2 levels.

me standing where Aunt Marion sat by barn door, holding her picture, 2018

foundation of cut stone showing 2 levels, proving it's the barn, on land grant, 2018

foundation of cut stone showing 2 levels, proving it's the barn, on land grant, 2018

Our place in time...Our spot, in history...Our location, across ages...Our environment over the eras.

Loyalists were promised good farmland and a thriving city. What they got was rocky land and complaining citizens. Our people became stone masons or farmed the land anyway. Loyalists left looking for fertile ground. Our people turned to fishing. Wooden shipbuilding businesses ceased when ship construction turned to steel. Some of us went to the city, to Halifax or Boston. But some of us stayed. We kept the land. And we didn't even know it.

All photos in author's collection unless otherwise specified

FOOTNOTES

1. *https://www.uelac.org/Loyalist-Projects/UELAC-Plates-Pre-Order-Form-V2.pdf*
2. *1791 poll tax records, archives.novascotia.ca*
3. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shelburne,_Nova_Scotia*

   https://shelburnens.ca/history-of-shelburne.html
4. *Vincent, G. R. 46 Acres, 5 Hoggs, and a Family...North Cumberland Historical Society, Pugwash, NS, 1986*
5. *1827 census, archives.novascotia.ca*
6. *1827 census, archives.novascotia.ca*
7. *Will of William Robertson, Shelburne County, https://archives.novascotia.ca/probate-records/*
8. *https://shelburnens.ca/history-of-shelburne.html*
9. *Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia Conference, May 2024*

Article shared from https://grandmasgrannysfamily album.substack.com/p/the-map-our-ancestors-forgot

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Anne Wendel

DEBORAH CARL

1758–1839

GEORGE BENTLEY, THE FORGOTTEN PATRIOT

Deborah blogs from https://YourFamilyQuest.com and her Substack publication of the same name. She also edits the Tips blog for https://MissionGenealogy.org.

SCAN ME

George Bentley served in the Revolutionary War, but his service was passed over on a Daughters of the American Revolution application in favor of his father. Stories250

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) website does not list every Revolutionary War soldier. Instead, it documents the ancestry of members who descend from proven patriots. In George Bentley's case, the one descendant who joined the DAR claimed lineage not through George but through his father, Lieutenant (some researchers say Captain) Tillinghast Bentley.1

Detail of John Rubens Smith, Swet's Tavern (Massachusetts: Newbury, 1832), ink wash and graphite drawing; Library of Congress. Colorized at MyHeritage.com

The story was first written by Lewis Bentley in 1888:

> *"He [George] was 17 when the Revolution broke out. He enlisted and served his country well for six years and seven months. When the war closed, he was discharged and paid in Continental money, and he started for home. Stopping at a Tory tavern, he was poisoned, from the effects of which he never recovered, until relieved by death..."2*

A version of the story was repeated around 1903 by John Otis Bentley:

> *"I am told that Geo Bentley, Sr. was wounded in the Revolutionary War and left for dead on the field of battle, but was found next day alive and carried to the house of a Tory, where he was nursed back to life and afterward married the daughter of the Tory."3*

George Bentley's Service

George Bentley enlisted at Beekman, Dutchess County, New York. He first served as a private in a company commanded by Captain James Rosekrans under Colonel Joseph Clinton for nine months in 1776. He later stated that he fought in the Battle of White Plains and in another battle near Philadelphia. In 1777, he reenlisted for an additional nine months in Captain Knox's Company, Colonel Birdsall's Regiment.4

His final enlistment came in the spring of 1778, when he joined Captain Smith's Company in Colonel Philip Van Cortlandt's Regiment at Valley Forge. On June 9, he was discharged because "of his being taken with convulsion fits..." Despite this, Colonel Vanderburgh of the militia expected George to continue his service. Although he was reportedly excused from guard duty, he remained on garrison duty at Beekman until the end of the war.5

The Battle of White Plains

The Battle of White Plains occurred on 28 October 1776, during the period George was actively serving, making it plausible that he was present. The Continental Army had been skirmishing almost daily with British forces around New York before withdrawing to White Plains, where supplies were available. They fortified the town with a line of breastworks that some soldiers later claimed were made "primarily of cornstalks."6

The army held the line until "the British and Hessian soldiers launched one final desperate assault and were met by determined musketry as they climbed the slopes of Chatterton Hill. Finally, a Hessian force dislodged the militia that protected the American right flank despite their fierce resistance." The Continental Army was forced to retreat into New Jersey. American losses totaled about 50 killed, 150 wounded, and 17 missing or captured.7

Thomas Sully, painter and Joseph Napoleon Gimbrede, engraver, Washington Crossing the Delaware (United States, 1842), print from wood engraving; Library of Congress. Colorized at MyHeritage.com

The "Battle Near Philadelphia"

As for the "battle near Philadelphia," George may have been referring to the Battle of Trenton. Fearful that the British would cross the frozen Delaware River and seize Philadelphia, members of the Continental Congress fled the city and reconvened in Baltimore.8

On 25 December 1776, George Washington launched his plan to cross the Delaware River in three waves. Washington's group would take the Trenton, New Jersey, garrison. Colonel John Cadwalader would strike the garrison at Burlington to prevent reinforcements, while Brigadier General James Ewing would secure the bridge across Assunpink Creek—the Hessians' likely escape route. Only Washington's force successfully crossed the river.9

The crossing was dark, cold, and the troops were battered by hail, sleet, and snow as they approached the garrison. Yet the attack succeeded: no Americans were killed, and the army seized essential guns and ammunition. The troops then recrossed the Delaware to Pennsylvania with roughly 900 prisoners.10

Sorting Legend from Reality

It is unlikely George was left for dead and cared for in a Tory household. If he had been seriously wounded at White Plains, he almost certainly would have been captured, as the Continental Army performed a fighting withdrawal and could not have returned for the injured. As for marrying a Tory's daughter, all we know is that George's wife was named Betsey. When George filed for a pension, Betsey was described as elderly, suffering from rheumatism, and "unable to labour."11

The poisoning story may have been an attempt to explain George's convulsions, which began in the spring of 1778—shortly after his final enlistment and arrival at Valley Forge. His symptoms could have been due to epilepsy, possibly caused by a head injury. Another possibility is mercury poisoning, possibly from poisoning at the hand of a Tory or from medical treatment by the regiment's doctor, as mercury was a common (and dangerous) component of 18th-century medicine.12

A Patriot Nonetheless

Although George Bentley does not appear as a patriot on the DAR or SAR websites, the record is clear: he enlisted multiple times, endured harsh conditions, and served until the end of the war. Titles aside, he was unquestionably a patriot—one whose contributions deserve to be remembered.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Descendants Search, Ancestor A009455, Nat'l # 821217, Tillinghast Bentley; Daughters of the American Revolution.*

2. *Lewis Bentley, The History of the Bentleys, (Maple Rapids, Michigan: W. E. Warner, 1888), unpaginated (about page 9); FamilySearch.*

3. *Julia Harrison Lobdell, Bentley Gleanings, (Chicago: A.W. Fleming, 1905), 61; FamilySearch.*

4. *Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files, Bentley, Azel–Bently, Thomas, packet for George Bentley, New York, S. 45263; Ancestry.*

5. *Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files, Bentley, Azel–Bently, Thomas, packet for George Bentley, New York, S. 45263; Ancestry.*

6. *"White Plains: Before the Battle," American Battlefield Trust.*

7. *"White Plains: During the Battle & Aftermath," American Battlefield Trust.*

8. "Battles of Trenton and Princeton: Washington Crosses the Delaware," Britannica.

9. "Battles of Trenton and Princeton: The Battle of Trenton," Britannica.

10. "Battles of Trenton and Princeton: The Battle of Trenton," Britannica. Also, "Winter Weather: A Challenge Since 1776," Washington Crossing Historic Park.

11. Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files, Bentley, Azel–Bently, Thomas, packet for George Bentley, New York, S. 45263, Schedule of Estate; Ancestry.

12. Kan Ding, Puneet K Gupta, and Ramon Diaz-Arraslia, Translational Research in Traumatic Brain Injury, Chapter 14 Epilepsy After Traumatic Brain Injury; National Library of Medicine. Also, Lily Wong-Kisiel, M.D., "Epilepsy;" Mayo Clinic. And, Tess Rauscher, "Benjamin Rush and Early American Medicine," 20 July 2025; Christ Church. And, Larry Holzwarth, "10 Ways the Victorians Unwittingly Poisoned Themselves Every Single Day: Hats," 24 December 2017; History Collection. And, "Mercury Poisoning," 7 July 2022; Cleveland Clinic.

Article shared from https://yourfamilyquest.substack.com/p/george-bentley-the-forgotten-patriot

Copyright 2026 Deborah Carl

Regimental Uniform Coat of Colonel Peter Gansevoort Jr. *Continental army uniform coat worn of the 3rd Regiment of the New York Continental Line. He wore this coat during his command of Fort Stanwix, New York, in 1777. Learn more: https://www.si.edu/object/regimental-uniform-coat-colonel-peter-gansevoort-jr%3Anmah_439538*

Credit: *Mrs. Abraham Lansing, in the collection of the National Museum of American History. Catalog number 12806,*

1758–1839

ISAAC WILLIAMSON, REVOLUTIONARY WAR PRIVATE

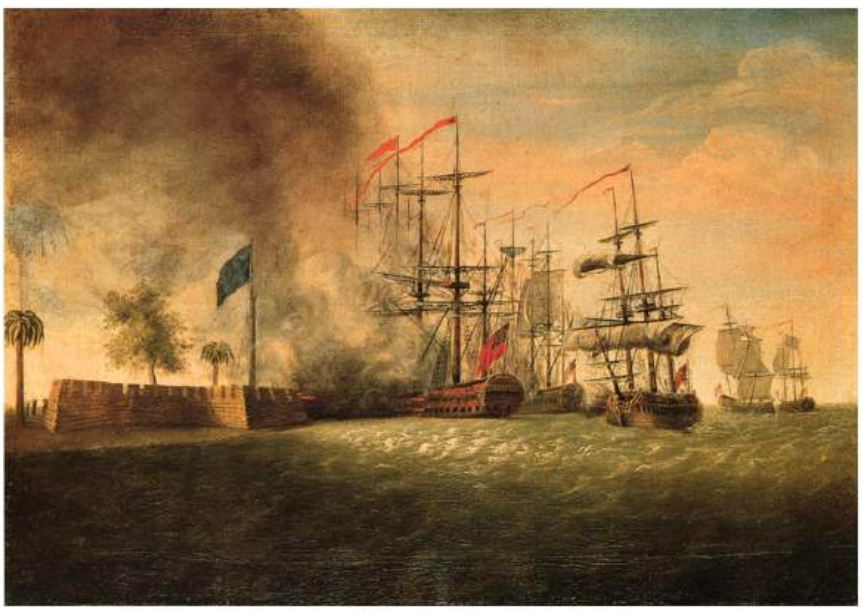
A brave & faithful soldier and much approved for his good conduct - Stories 250

Anne blogs at Grandma's Granny's Family Album https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com This piece was part of Genealogy Matters Storyteller Tuesday Challenge: HISTORY HAPPENED.

SCAN ME

My partner's ancestors have been here since Jamestown, the first English-speaking colony in North America, so I am sure he must have multiple ancestors who fought in the Revolutionary War.

Isaac is my first find!



"Sir Peter Parker's Attack Against Fort Moultrie," oil on canvas1

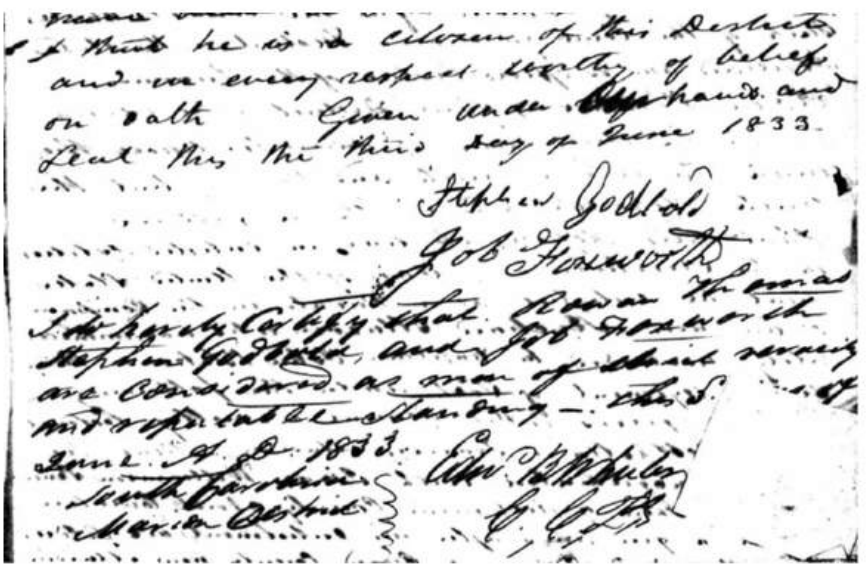
RECORDED TALK

SCAN ME

What we know of Isaac's service is documented in a very thorough 25-page pension application. Not only does it have Isaac's statement detailing his service, but it also contains depositions from others. These depositions, gathered over a period of twelve months, were taken from several different men who lived in two different states. The last clerk to touch the application compared the testimonies of the different soldiers with official accounts of battles.

Isaac started his quest in the court of his home county, Richmond, North Carolina. First he had to prove his age so he could get a pension. That was tricky; he swore there was no record of his birth and he was going by what his father had always told him: he was born in 1758 in Coharie in what turned into Sampson County, North Carolina.

Then he had to explain why he enlisted in a different state, so he swore that his father took the family to the Peedee River in South Carolina when he was young, and he lived in Georgetown, South Carolina at the time he joined up.



A sample page from Isaac's pension file. So hard to read, I had to print it out and transcribe it first!

The next hurdle was that Isaac couldn't find his discharge papers proving his service. That wasn't as big a problem as it sounds; many men couldn't. They had to rely on what was called traditionary evidence, statements from witnesses. So Isaac had to go looking for men he had served with to verify his statement. Unfortunately, it was now 1832 and the war had been over for almost 50 years. Isaac was 74; the men he needed were either equally old or dead and gone.

Even worse, Isaac no longer lived where he had enlisted. That meant he had to seek the help of veterans who did live near him to swear they believed he was a soldier in the same war, even tho they had no first-hand knowledge of it.

When Isaac did find men he had served with, still living in South Carolina, the clerks of court asked for anecdotes of their time together. How and when did they meet? Whom did they serve under? What battles did they fight in? What did they do between battles, and where?

Isaac's comrades came thru. One even declared him "a brave & faithful soldier and much approved for his good conduct." The last clerk, at home in Laurinburg, Richmond County, found that all the accounts, anecdotal as well as official, matched each other. He recommended approving the application.

Isaac rated the highest pension given, full pay, because he had served more than two years, collecting $40 every six months. He drew it for six years before he died.2

Re-enactment of Battle of Sullivan's Island on the 250th anniversary, 28 June 2026, photo by author

Isaac's War Service

Isaac fought in one of the most important battles of the Revolution, the one that told the British, this isn't some rebellion to be squashed. This is a war.

It was the Battle of Sullivan's Island, in Charleston Harbor, on June 28, 1776.

After the rebels had forced the British out of Boston in March 1776, the royal governors of the southern colonies invited the British to come south, assuring them the people were Loyalists who would welcome their arrival. While this was true in the main, the British had to first get past the Patriots on the coast. General Sir Henry Clinton was sent to Charleston, South Carolina, the fourth biggest city in North America, to make a start.

In February 1776, before the British even left Boston, before they chose to attack Charleston, Patriots anticipated this move; contracted laborers and slaves began to build a fort on Sullivan's Island at the mouth of Charleston Harbor.3 Colonel William Moultrie, leader of the 2nd South Carolina Regiment of Foot, was put in charge in March. Isaac, in the 2nd, worked with the 3rd South Carolina4 and other regiments to finish and eventually defend this fort. It was built out of materials plentiful on the island...palmetto trees and sand.

Colonel William Moultrie, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2nd_South_Carolina_Regiment

The Americans used palmetto trees to build walls and filled the space with clay and sand. Botanists do not classify palmetto as a tree. It has a spongy interior, not rings. Its fiber absorbs impact instead of splintering and shattering like other wood. Isaac and the rest of Moultrie's men built a 500-foot square fort with high, 16-foot-wide sides filled with sand. Planked gun platforms held 31 cannons. Except that it wasn't finished. Only the two sides facing the harbor were complete, and there was no rear wall at all.

A modern replica of Fort Moultrie, photo by author

When the British fleets arrived outside the harbor on June 1, 1776, Clinton demanded the fort surrender. No reply came, so an attack was planned.

The British fleet, totalling nearly forty ships, began arriving outside the harbor on June 1, 1776. This capture of the richest city on the continent was to be a joint Army-Navy mission. Nine warships of the British Navy were commanded by Sir Peter Parker. The rest carried Sir Henry Clinton's supplies, horses, and troops for the planned conquest.

The plan called for the warships to assault the fort, the infantry to march across the island, and frigates to sail over the Charles Town Bar to attack the rear of the backless fort. Except that the Bar was a notorious ever-shifting group of sandbars waiting to trap the unwary; ships only made it past with the direction of experienced pilots.5 Sure enough, the frigates ran aground and were useless. By the end of the day, high tide freed two of them, but the third ship had to be abandoned and burned by its own crew.

Clinton's troops had been put ashore on Long Island, north of Breach Inlet. On the morning of June 28, following intelligence that the water was only 18 inches deep, Clinton personally led his infantry into the waters of Breach Inlet. The intelligence was wrong. The inlet was actually 7 feet deep, even at low tide. Clinton then tried to cross on flatboats, but was driven back by sniper fire. So the plan for the two-pronged land-and-sea attack was scuttled; it was all up to Sir Peter and his warships, who were formidable enough.

At 10:00 am, nine British warships anchored a mile from the fort and began shooting their combined cannon. Afterward, 7000 fired cannonballs were found in and around the fort.6 Defending the fort, Moultrie's regiments had a limited supply of ammunition. The smoke was so thick, Isaac and the other Americans could not always see the ships they were aiming for. Only twelve of their cannons were effective in hitting the British ships. The British expected to prevail; just looking at the numbers, we would agree. Even the American experts believed the unfinished fort was doomed.

The British superiority in weapons and ammunition wasn't working out too well for them. Many of their ships weren't anchored in the right position to damage the fort. Even the balls that did hit didn't make much difference. Isaac felt the balls hit, but the walls didn't burst. The palmetto logs absorbed most of the cannon balls like sponges; the boast that the cannon balls bounced off the fort is actually true for a few of them. Little damage was inflicted.7

To fix this problem, the crew of the *HMS Thunder* began overpacking their cannon with powder to give their shots more speed. Bad choice. The cannons were now heavier and the planks under them began to buckle. The captain called for carpenters from other ships to make repairs, but the ship's deck was destroyed. By the middle of the afternoon, the *Thunder* had to stop fighting.

Cannon balls on left, chain link shot center top, at re-enactment 28 June 2026, photo by author

But John Rutledge, president of the newly independent nation of South Carolina, had faith in his men and in his friend Moultrie.8 With limited supplies of powder, Moultrie was making each shot count. Isaac, if he manned a cannon, would have followed orders to fire slowly and carefully; Fort Sullivan men sent off only one shot for every fifty that the British fired. Almost all the American shots, however, hit their desired targets.9 When American cannon balls hit oak ships, sharp splinters several feet long flew into sailors' flesh. The decks were full of bodies and slimy with blood. The Americans even used chain links as ammunition; they were very effective in felling masts. Literally adding insult to injury, Commodore Sir Peter Parker had his pants shot off him.10

The iconic moment of the battle came when a British shot cut the fort's flagstaff, dropping the flag. Sergeant William Jasper jumped up on the ramparts, dropped over the walls, and grabbed the flag, despite constantly being fired upon. He then climbed back up into the fort and tied the flag to an artillery sponge staff. As long as he saw that flag overhead, Isaac would have known the fort was still theirs.

When night fell, the British retreated to the open sea.

The residents watching from shore couldn't tell what had happened under the heavy shelling and smoke from so many fires. But the British army knew. They had skulked away with their tails between

Sergeant Jasper raising the fallen flag, McBarron, H. Charles Jr., "Charleston 1776," 1974.11

The South Carolina state flag today

their legs. Very soon after, the South Carolina General Assembly named Fort Moultrie in honor of its victorious commander.12

Palmetto trees had saved the colony. For the rest of his life, Isaac knew he was a part of that.

The South Carolina state flag has a palmetto tree in honor of its role in the Battle of Sullivan's Island.13 June 28 has been celebrated as Carolina Day ever since.

Joel's War Service

In his pension application, Isaac stated that he had three brothers, Shadrach, Joel, and Richard, serving "with him." Isaac was the only brother to apply for a pension. Why?

Shadrach survived the war, coming home to a long adult life. However, he had died by 1832 when the pension act came into effect.

Whereas Isaac was discharged in July 1778 after three years, Joel fought on. Joel apparently served in the 5th South Carolina Rifles under Major Benjamin Huger14 (pronounced You-gee). Huger was accidentally killed by friendly fire at Charleston on May 11, 1779.15

At that time, Charleston was once again saved, by what became known as the "false alarm." This time it came at great personal cost to Isaac and his brothers.

Three years after their first attempt, the British, under Brigadier General Augustine Prevost with approximately 2,400 British Regulars and Loyalists, tried taking the important port again. Having learned their lesson trying to maneuver in an unfamiliar harbor, they decided to attack by land. As they marched towards Charlestown, the Patriots under now-General Moultrie built a line of earthworks stretching from the Cooper River to the Ashley River, to cut off land approaches to the city.16

Major Henry Moore of the Continental Artillery Regiment of South Carolina wrote in his memoir of fighting in this battle under General Lincoln.

Charles Town, on upper left, lies in between the Ashley and Cowper (Cooper) Rivers. That is where the regiments built the earthworks as a line of defense.17

Source: 1780 George Sroule map of Charleston Harbor from the Library of Congress.

> *" I was ordered to Charleston to take charge of a detachment of thirty men and two field pieces, with four ammunition wagons.... I had marched with my detachment .... and .... received orders to (go to Charleston) as soon as possible. I promptly obeyed orders and on May 11th, 1779, I joined (the other regiments).*
>
> *"On the night of the 11th of May, the enemy crossed the Ashley River, and the next day (British) Gen. Prevost, with about nine hundred men, appeared before the lines and demanded a surrender of the City."18*

Talks ensued, possibly as a delaying tactic to give the Patriot armies time to arrive and prepare for battle. Once American General Pulaski arrived with his troops, they attacked.19

Major Henry Moore further recalled:

> *"On the night of the 12th, a false alarm occasioned a firing of cannon and musketry along the whole extent of the lines, from river to river. This continued blaze of artillery and small arms appeared to my view amidst the darkness of the night from the horn works, where I was stationed, as if the horizon was on fire; with repeated peals of thunder it was awfully sublime. It had its effect on the enemy, who judging from the extent and the steadiness of our fire, that our lines were far better manned and stronger than they had apprehended, and the garrison more numerous. Under these impressions they retreated during the night..."20*

Major Huger, while returning with a scouting party, was killed near his own lines by his own soldiers.

Fellow soldier Richard Dean, in his own pension application, recalled, "There are some of our troops going out of (the) fort, to an engagement or skirmish with the British... on their return in the dusk of the evening, they were...mistaken for the enemy and were fired on by their fellow soldiers... (Major) Huger and several others were killed."21

One of those soldiers killed by friendly fire was Joel Williamson, who was wounded that night and died several days later.22

> *He also States that He had 3 Brothers in the service with Him say Shedrick, Joel, & Richard _ Shedrick returned after he was discharged & is now dead Joel was wounded in a False Alarm at the time Cap. Hagry was Killed along this line between Cooper & Ashley Rivers, & died Some days afterward, Richard went on board a Privateer & He does not Know What has become of him _ - from Isaac's pension application*

Richard's War Service

Joel was not the only brother Isaac would lose.

He told the government in his pension application, "Richard went on board a Privateer & He (Isaac) does not Know What has become of him _."

It's no wonder he didn't know. Privateering was the most thrilling, dangerous, and lucrative way to fight the enemy with the least oversight. No muster rolls. No regimental histories. No evidence if the ship sunk. Only personal diaries, letters of marque, and sales at auction. And big prizes if you won...cannons, ammunition, commercial goods, even the ship itself.

Privateers were privately owned ships which had been given legal permission, called letters of marque, to attack the enemy in the Revolution. Letters of marque allowed their holders to seize enemy ships and claim the ship and cargo as spoils of war. The ship and cargo were then sold at auction and the proceeds split between the owner and the crew.23

A 1782 fight between an American privateer and a British ship off Halifax, Nova Scotia24

As one of the busiest ports in North America, Charleston was a hunting ground drawing predators to their prey. For example, on one day in 1778, two American privateers sailed out of Charleston, spotted three British privateers, captured two, and forced the other to flee.25

Some historians credit privateering with a solid contribution to the war's outcome. They note that the attacks forced the powerful British Navy to divert its ships to fight the privateers instead of forts. Insurance companies inflated their prices to insure ships and commerce couldn't get thru; both contributed to the British feeling that the war was just too inconvenient and costly.26

When Richard boarded that privateer, he helped harass the British into surrendering. He got no war memorial, no pension, not even a grave. We would in fact not even know of his existence if it weren't for his brother's application. But he played a vital role in our independence nonetheless.

As Isaac's Colonel Moultrie wrote years later, Americans were rising up against "a rich and powerful nation, with numerous fleets, and experienced admirals sailing triumphant over the ocean; with large armies and able generals in many parts of the globe: This great nation we dared to oppose, without money; without arms; without ammunition; no generals; no armies; no admirals; and no fleets; this was our situation when the contest began."27

The Williamsons were part of this incredible upset. Four brothers served their country, and only two came home.

Isaac Williamson's 4th great-grandson on right, with a re-enactor from the 2nd South Carolina on left, on the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Sullivan's Island, 28 June 2026, photo by author

APPENDIX

Excerpts from a song written after the battle skewering Sir Peter Parker:

> *A New War Song*
>
> *With much labor and toil, Unto Sullivan's Isle,*
>
> *I came firm as Falstaff or Pistol,*
>
> *But the Yankees, God rot 'em, I could not get at 'em:*

> *Most terribly maul'd my poor Bristol. (his ship)*
>
> *Bold Clinton by land, Did quietly Stand,*
>
> *While I made a thundering clatter;*
>
> *But the channel was deep, So he only could peep,*
>
> *And not venture over the water.*
>
> *Devil take 'em, their Shot Came so swift and so hot,*
>
> *And the cowardly dogs stood so stiff, sirs!*
>
> *That I put ship about, And was glad to get out,*
>
> *Or they would not have left me a skiff, sirs!*
>
> *But my Lords, do not fear, For before the next year,*
>
> *Altho a small island could fret us,*
>
> *The Continent whole, We shall take, by my soul,*
>
> *If the cowardly Yankees will let us.28*

FURTHER READING

- *https://americainclass.org/sources/makingrevolution/rebellion/text4/text4.htm*
- *https://revolutionarywar.us/year-1780/battle-of-charleston/*
- *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2nd_South_Carolina_Regiment*
- *https://www.continentalline.org/CL/units/*

FOOTNOTES

1. *Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sir_Peter_Parkers_Attack_Against_Fort_Moultrie.jpeg*
2. *Pension file of Isaac Williamson, U.S., Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, 1800-1900, Ancestry.com*
3. *National Park Service, Carolina Day, 28 June 2026*
4. *Pension file*
5. *See my post on Captain Joseph Durfee, who helped the British navigate Charleston Harbor Captain Joseph Durfee Stories 250*
6. *Rickeman, Norm, Unsung: William Moultrie and the Battle of Sullivan's Island, Palmetto Publishing, 2024.*
7. *Carolina Day*
8. *Rickeman*

9. *https://www.battlefields.org/learn/revolutionary-war/battles/sullivans-island-south-carolina*

10. *Carolina Day*

11. *https://sullivansisland.sc.gov/si250-celebration*

12. *https://www.battlefields.org/learn/revolutionary-war/battles/sullivans-island-south-carolina*

13. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_South_Carolina*

14. *Pension file*

15. *https://www.americanhistorycentral.com/entries/isaac-huger-general-american-revolution/*

16. *https://www.carolana.com/SC/Revolution/revolution_charleston_neck.html*

17. *https://www.ccpl.org/charleston-time-machine/navigating-bar-charleston-harbor-gateway-atlantic*

18. *https://fairfieldgenealogysociety.org/Members_Only/Families/Moore-Moores/Documents/Memoir%20Major%20Henry%20Moore.pdf*

19. *https://www.carolana.com/SC/Revolution/revolution_charleston_neck.html*

20. *https://fairfieldgenealogysociety.org/Members_Only/Families/Moore-Moores/Documents/MemoirMajorHenryMoore.pdf*

21. *Pension application of Richard Dean S16761 f18SC Transcribed by Will Graves 2/14/08 rev'd 12/3/14, https://www.revwarapps.org/s16761.pdf*

22. *Pension file*

23. *https://www.americanheritage.com/american-rebels-sea*

24. *https://www.americanheritage.com/american-rebels-sea*

25. *https://www.carolana.com/SC/Revolution/revolution_charleston_harbor_8.html*

26. *https://www.americanheritage.com/american-rebels-sea*

27. *https://www.americanheritage.com/american-rebels-sea*

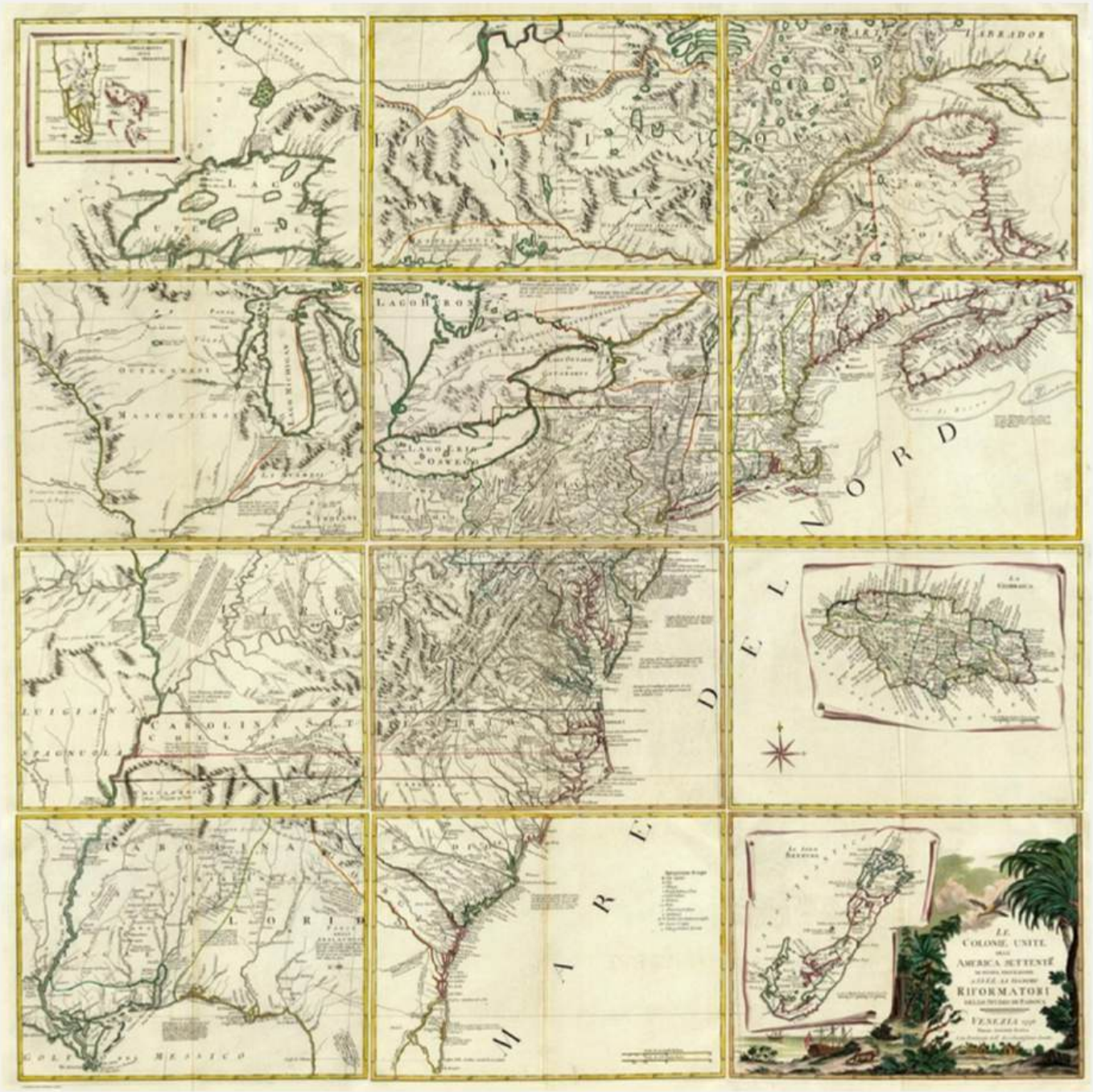
28. *Re-enactment by 2nd South Carolina Regiment of Foot, Carolina Day 2026, Fort Moultrie*

Article shared from https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/isaac-williamson-revolutionary-war

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Anne Wendel

I used Claude.ai to help me revise and edit.



Le Colonie Unite dell' America Settentrle," created by John Mitchell, G.T. Raynal, and Antonio Zatta, and published in 1778 by Antonio Zatta in Venice.

Credit: *The map is part of the Rumsey Collection and is cataloged under the List No. 5007.016. https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~684~70121:Composite--Colonie-Unite-dell--Amer*

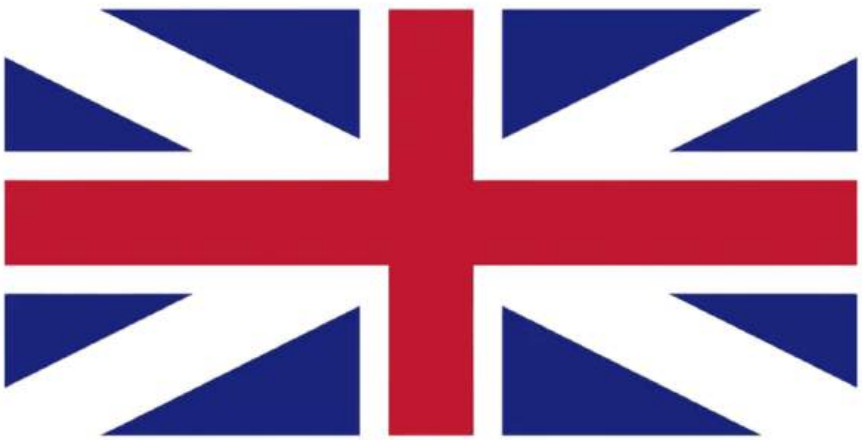
1759–1786

ESTHER CRANK & JOHN B. ACKER ~ WHO THEY LEFT BEHIND

Anne blogs at Grandma's Granny's Family Album https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com This piece was part of Genealogy Matters Storyteller Tuesday Challenge: HISTORY HAPPENED.

SCAN ME

Hester Krankheyt and Jan Ecker, Who Was Left ~ Stories 250



Flag of the United Empire Loyalists, based on the flag of the Kingdom of Great Britain that was in use at the time of the Revolutionary War. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_the_United_Empire_Loyalists.svg

In the US, siding with England in the Revolutionary War makes you at best a loser and at worst a traitor. But in Canada, being a United Empire Loyalist is a badge of honor. If you can prove your descent from one, you can apply for a lineage society, earning the right to put UEL after your name and on your license plate.

Are we Loyalists?

Today, 231 years ago, my 3rd great-grandfather Stephen Acker and his younger brother John were baptized in Christ Church, Anglican Parishes of St. George and St. Patrick, Shelburne, Nova Scotia. Stephen was 11 and John was 7. Just months before in April, their sister Catherine, age 12, and brother Jacob, who was 4, were baptized also. Their oldest brother Henry didn't get baptized until he got married at the age of 32.1

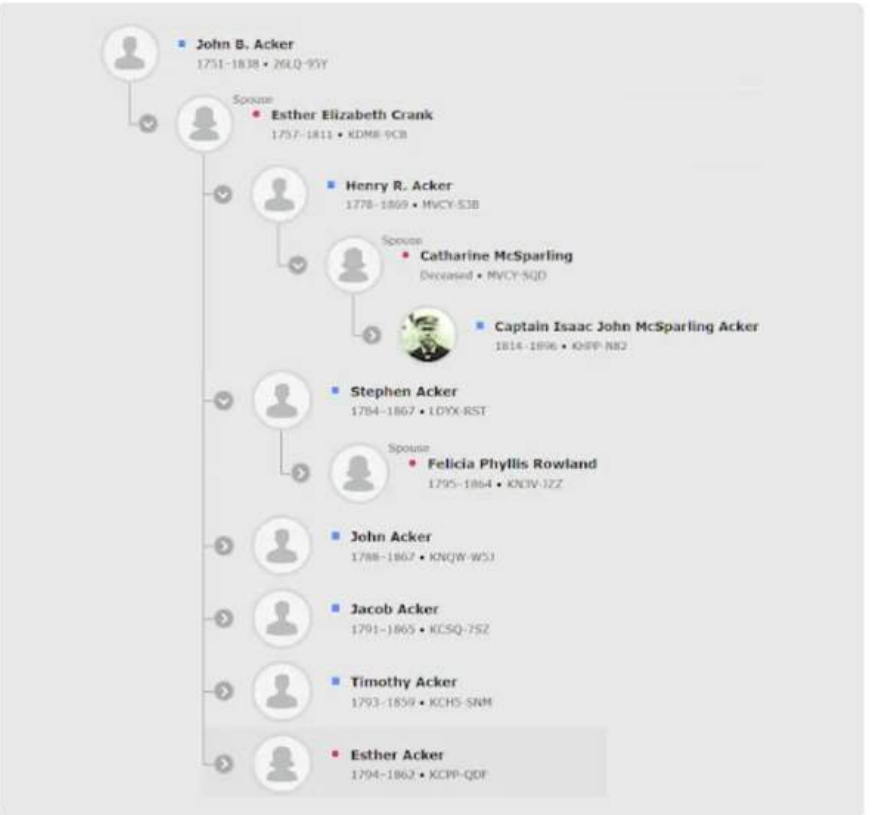
Old Christ Church, Shelburne2

It seems unusual to me for a family to baptize their children when they are older, in the Episcopal/Anglican church where baptisms usually involve infants. Why would they do that? They were on the run? No, Ester and John Acker had been in Shelburne for twelve years by then and they had land there. The church had just been built? No, Shelburne was an established town of Loyalists, people who had remained loyal to England during the American Revolution, and you would expect a town of loyal Englishpeople to have plenty of Anglican churches. Their church membership made me think the Ackers were of English descent, while they consistently, over the next century, said they were German.

Shelburne today has a tourist economy based on its establishment by United Empire Loyalists. My relatives there didn't know if our family were Loyalists or not. But the Genealogical Society housed a family history booklet made by a large clan of Acker descendants.3 I discovered we were Loyalists! My 4th great-grandparents, were John B. Acker and Esther Crank. They had come to Shelburne after the Revolution and gotten a land grant.

Where were we from?

Where were Ester and John B. Acker from before they arrived in Shelburne with their little boy Henry and baby Catherine? My first clue was that John Acker testified as a witness for a man named Samuel Davenport, who claimed that he was forced to abandon his lands in Philipsburg by the Americans, run for his life, and hide out in New York City. John said he knew Samuel well.4 That pointed me to look for the origin of the Acker family in Philipsburg. The next question is, where was that?



Family tree showing the children of Esther Crank and John B. Acker

Philipsburg was a manor in Westchester County, New York owned by Frederick Philipse during the Revolution. It was begun in 1672 by his grandfather, also Frederick Philipse. Altho the British had taken over Dutch New Netherland and renamed it New York, the Dutch manors ran like the manors of the Middle Ages, with lots of tenant farmers. And the majority of tenants on Philipsburg Manor were of Dutch descent, the great-grandchildren of the original Dutch settlers of 1624.5

So were the Ackers Dutch? The words Dutch and German have a tendency to be substituted for each other because the German word for German is Deutsch. Were they tenant farmers in Philipsburg? The church on the grounds, the Old Dutch Church and Burying Ground, was of the Protestant denomination Dutch Reformed, and they conducted their services, naturally, in Dutch. In the church records, there are an awful lot of people named Ecker, and their first names are Steffens, Jan, Catalyntie, Jakob, Heinrich, Hester.

There's another reason people are baptized - they want to change religions. There weren't any Dutch Reformed churches in Shelburne. It seems the Ackers got tired of waiting for one to start up and became Anglicans.

There's another reason people are baptized - they want to change religions. There weren't any Dutch Reformed churches in Shelburne. It seems the Ackers got tired of waiting for one to start up and became Anglicans.

Grace Robertson Wilson with daughter Edie, Newton Centre, Massachusetts, 1973, photo in author's collection

On the trip home from Shelburne, we stopped to see my Auntie Grace in Boston with our discovery. From her I learned that our family had lived in Ossining, New York before the Revolution. When the War was lost, the new government confiscated our land and built Sing Sing Prison on it. Aunt Marion, who married into the family with ambition, an iron will, and a strong sense of her rights, had investigated with an eye to suing the state of New York for compensation. Whether she was denied or never amassed enough evidence, we didn't get any money.

Aunt Marion's quest was always going to fail, because our ancestors didn't own any land. The Acker and Crankheit (Crank) families were tenant farmers on Frederick Philipse's land, Philipsburgh Manor. That was confiscated after the Revolution, but it was sold in parcels to whoever wanted it.

Aunt Marion by Shelburne barn, 1924, photo in author's collection

Many of my relatives are very tall, very thin, very pale, very light-haired, and very long-lived, or some combination thereof. These are our Acker genes at work. At least 3 men are over 6 ft-5. My mother could get sunburned in the shade. Auntie Grace missed her 100th birthday by two months. The lady in this picture is very tall and very blonde; she is Ann Acker. She is even a double Acker, since her grandfathers were brothers.

From left, my grandfather Joe Robertson with son Frank, his father Joe Robertson with my mother Anne, his mother Ann Acker Robertson with dog, unknown man with Joe's son Joseph Jr., Joe's brother Havelock Robertson, Shelburne, Nova Scotia, 1921, photo in author's collection.

The next time I went to Shelburne to search, the Acker genes for long lives delighted me, for I found that Henry Acker had lived to be 90, and that meant that he died late enough to be included in the new government vital statistics. There was more proof that we were Loyalists - he was born in New York, and it gave his father's name, John B. Acker. A few pages over, John Acker Jr. died with parents John and Esther Acker. Two lines down, a person I didn't know named Catherine Shultz had the same parents. They must all be siblings! She was long-lived enough to show that she had been born in the United States in 1783.6

Next I started looking at church records from Philipsburgh Manor in Westchester County, NY, since that is where my ancestor John B. Acker said he was from. The records are partially written in Dutch, which is actually pretty easy to read, once you know that Kind means child and gedoopt means baptized. The records collection is called Record Book of the Old Dutch Church of Sleepy Hollow. I remembered that the Headless Horseman chased Ichabod Crane thru the graveyard of the Old Dutch Church, so I looked to see how many Dutch churches there were in Westchester County, and how far Philipsburgh and Sleepy Hollow are from each other.

Come to find out, there is only one Dutch church, and it is old, having been built in 1697. When more churches were built, their services were conducted in English. And Philipsburgh and Sleepy Hollow are basically the same place. So I made my next visit to the Old Dutch Church of Sleepy Hollow, then known as Philipsburgh Manor, in Westchester County, just north of New York City.

The obvious record to look for would be for a baptism for Catherine in 1782/83. I decided, in the interests of not missing anything, to start in Old Dutch Church baptism records for 1790 and work backwards. After all, events can be recorded much later than the date they took place.

Pretty soon I got scared. Parents were bringing in all their kids to be baptized at once. Usually the youngest was an infant, and it looked like when they brought that baby in, they baptized all their other kids too, at ages 2, 5, 7....Why were they doing that? Why weren't the older kids baptized already? I was afraid it was because there was a war going on, and everyone was displaced, or afraid to leave their homes, or the church was being used as a fort, or no records were kept, or they were destroyed, or.....almost anything.

Historical marker reads THE OLD DUTCH CHURCH of Sleepy Hollow built 1697 by Frederick Philipse first Lord of the Manor, In use since, except in Revolution; me in front of Old Dutch Church, June 2024; photos by author.

Sure enough, the records completely stopped in 1785. A notation even said it was because of the war. So absolutely no baptism for Catherine or Henry.

Old Dutch Church, when we visited, June 2024, photo by author

I thought I might get lucky and find a marriage for Esther and John. Since Henry was probably born in 1779, they were probably married in 1778 or 1777. So I looked thru marriages. No dice.

Well, Esther and John were probably born at Philipsburgh, so I could look for their baptisms, at least. Thank Goodness I found somebody! A lot of children were baptized on April 24, 1759, including Hester, daughter of Hendrick Krankheyt and Hester Danels.7

I had already noticed name changes after the United States became a country. There were plenty of Ackers after 1790, but not before. Before 1790, there were tons of Eckers, but no Ackers. To make sure, I matched a Jacob Acker after the War to the same man beforehand, when he was Jacob Ecker.

It was the same way with the Cranks. Plenty of Cronks and Cranks after the Revolution, but beforehand, they were Crankheit. Or Cronkheit, Cranckheyt, Krankheyt, and any other way you can think of. Crankheit means sickness, so I can see why a person would want to change it. Yes, it is the same name as news anchor Walter Cronkhite, and yes, we are related to him.8

It made complete sense that Hester Krankheyt was named after her mother Hester Danels, that she became Esther Crank after the War, and that she named her first son Henry after her father Hendrick.

Where were Esther, John, and their children during the War? What did they do to earn passage to Nova Scotia and a land grant? I can't find any evidence of military service or any other reason. And where were all the other Krankheyts and Eckers? Why didn't they evacuate too? Weren't they Loyalists?

Parr Street, Shelburne, 2017, photo by author

Esther and John's land grant was in town, on Parr Street. A land grant in town was highly desired. The people who got grants in town were the earlier evacuees. John's witness statement said he was a cordwainer, a person who makes shoes from scratch, as opposed to a cobbler who cobbles worn shoes back together. Cordwainers crafted especially expensive shoes from fine leather; the word comes from Cordoba, Spain, which exports quality leather. Where would you practice such a trade? On Philipsburgh Manor, where the only people who could afford it would be the lord and lords of other manors? In New York City?

Left: 1784 map with Loyalist grants, no streets laid out. Right: 1899 map of town with streets - Parr Street is 6th from and parallel to the harbour. 9

John swore that Samuel Davenport was a merchant who left all his lands in Philipsburgh and escaped to New York City in 1777. Did John and Esther do that too? Did they marry and baptize their children in the city? The original Shelburne immigrants were wealthy men from New York City. Were Esther and John in the right place at the right time to get a town lot grant?

A John Acker, yeoman, took the oath of fidelity to King George III between 13 January and 26 February 1777 in the presence of New York Royal Governor Tryon and the Mayor of New York City.10 Is he my John B? I think so. Pledging allegiance to the king got you exiled. Getting exiled got you a land grant. This is the only evidence I have found as yet to tell me what entitled John B to a grant.

Hester Krankheyt, thankfully, is well documented and DNA-confirmed. She has parents and siblings, with a brother whose descendants I match to. She even has recorded forebears back to her Dutch immigrant great-great-grandmother Wyntje Theunis in 1627.

John Acker is a completely different story. His forefathers founded the Old Dutch Church in 1696, but John himself? Well, how many ancestors do you have named John? I have 316. You probably do too, because 5.8 million Johns have been born since 1530. Add to that the cognates of John in other languages - Johann, Juan, Sean, Giovanni - and you know why genealogists groan when they find a John to research.

So it is not surprising that altho John B. Acker was the only man of that name when he lived in Shelburne, there were quite a few men named John or Jan Acker or Ecker in his hometown of Philipsburgh. Jan, pronounced YON, is the Dutch form of John, and Ecker was the preferred version of Acker before the Revolution.

There are three John Ackers in Philipsburgh born in the same time period: Jan Ecker born around 1750, John Acker born about 1753, and Johannis aka John Ecker born in 1759.

To sort out these choices, I visited the New York City Public Library. This building is so beautiful, they give tours. It was hard to convince the security guard I was there to research, not sightsee!

Rose Main Reading Room at the New York Public Library. Photo by author.

I had heard of a book detailing the genealogies of every family in Philipsburgh, sounding like the pot of gold. At the library, the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society holds one of only two copies of The Families of the Colonial Town of Philipsburgh Westchester County N.Y. by Grenville McKenzie.

Despite the vastness of the library and the thoroughness of Grenville McKenzie, we have no definite answers.

Choice #1. Jan Ecker born around 1750

Jan married Catriena Buys in 1771 and had two daughters. Then the entire family disappeared. Grenville McKenzie thinks that this Jan Ecker was probably captured by the British in 1777 and died in Sugar House Prison.

Sugar House Prison sounds like a sweet place to serve a sentence - maybe it's like the gingerbread house where Hansel and Gretel were imprisoned waiting for the witch to eat them. Sadly, it's not a house made of sugar. When the British occupied New York City during the Revolution, they needed buildings to use as prisons for all the enemy combatants and civilian traitors they captured. A prison needs to be big, sturdy, and impossible to escape from. So in addition to aged warships anchored in the harbor, they used available stone or brick buildings - churches, classrooms at King's College (now Columbia University), and warehouses.

The sugar import industry was profitable in the port of New York, where raw sugar from the Caribbean could be easily unloaded, stored, refined, and sold to the many wealthy inhabitants. Sugar warehouses had thick stone or brick walls with many empty floors and few windows, already barred.

Starting in 1777, the British used two sugar houses as prisons - Livingston's, on Crown Street (now Liberty Street), and van Cortlandt's, which was conveniently located next to the Trinity Church graveyard where bodies could be dumped in mass graves. About 30,000 prisoners were kept in New York City during the course of the War, and 60% to 70% of them died there in inhuman conditions. The references give websites where you can read horrifying first-hand accounts.11

Louis Oram. Livingston's Sugar House, 1830. Museum of the City of New York. 29.100.1613.

Livingston's Sugar House 50 years after its use as a prison.

Noting that Grenville McKenzie said "probably," I searched for further records. However, I cannot find any sign of a Jan Ecker being captured or held prisoner, or of Catriena or their daughters in later life. If they weren't in New York, does this mean they went to Shelburne? But Catriena is not Hester, and their daughters are not Henry.

Choice #2. John Acker born about 1753

We know about this John because he was listed in the will of his father Deliverance Ecker. Deliverance's first wife, Judah/Judith Barheyt, died young at age 34. John would have been about 9, and the oldest of Judah's six children, Stephen, age 12. Then Deliverance married Wyntie Brown and had two more children. But alas! Deliverance then died, only 36. He must have known he was going to die because he wrote his will only the week before. Poor Wyntie had a 16-month-old son of her own and was pregnant.

Gravestone of Deliverance Acker in the Old Dutch Churchyard of Sleepy Hollow, New York, photo by author. It is hard to read. There is an angel with wings on top, a very old and therefore rare gravestone design. No one knows why Deliverance is spelled Deliuranel.

Deliverance's will was simple. He left his new gun and sword to his oldest son, Stephen, and his old gun to his second son, John. He left 100 pounds of good New York money to his dear loving wife, along with his mare and the bed and bedding. Everything else was to be divided among his eight children.

I imagine Wolfert, Benjamin, and the rest of the families of Judah, Deliverance, and Wyntie all helped raise the children. They were all big established families in the area. But what they didn't know when

they set out to shepherd eight grieving children safely to adulthood was that more life-shattering events were to come. The sorrowful part is what they didn't know -- that the British Parliament was passing the first of several laws that would provoke tension until it exploded into a war that would ravage their homes.

Deliverance's sons Jacob and Benjamin fought on the rebel side in favor of independence from Great Britain. Jacob, called Rifle Jake, was a soldier famous for his marksmanship. One day Jake was hunting rabbits in the brush when he saw the British marching down the road. Hidden, he shot a soldier, then waited until the redcoats had taken the dying man away before shooting their captain thru the ear. Hearing his shots, a company of American militiamen hiding in the tall grass by the Old Dutch Church rushed in and reportedly wiped out the entire 28-man squad.12 Jake got the credit.

Youngest brother Benjamin was even more consequential. Only 17 years old and a ferryman on the Hudson River, Benjamin was an unknowing part of a plot that nearly brought the new United States down. He ferried British Major John Andre'13 and Loyalist spy Joshua Hett Smith across the river to meet with traitor Benedict Arnold. After Andre' was caught and the plot unraveled, Ben testified at Smith's trial.

A waterman, Ben recalled his actions in interviews as an old man for historian John MacDonald. He remembered laying in ambush in the bushes when a boat approached from a British frigate. Nine men and one woman were on board. Not wishing to hurt the woman, they let them land, then rose and fired. The boaters returned fire, but Ben and his group killed two, wounded two, made prisoners of the other five, and let the women go.14

Grenville McKenzie's book also tells us that Deliverance's son John enlisted on the rebel side under Captains Martlings and Honeywell. John later married Cornelia Gardenier, lived in Ossining, had two sons, and died in 1808.

So this John Acker has nothing to suggest that he may be John B the Loyalist who evacuated to Shelburne. But I cannot get him out of my mind. Because John B has a great-grandson named George Deliverance Acker, born in Shelburne in 1816.

George Deliverance Acker's grave in Churchover Anglican Cemetery, Shelburne, Nova Scotia, photo by author

Where on earth would George D. get a name like Deliverance? I even find it odd among the Dutch in Philipsburgh. Surely it could only be from his great-grandfather, the Deliverance Acker who died at age 36 and left his guns and sword to his sons. That Deliverance Acker was named for his grandfather, Deliverij Conckelie, also spelled Deliverens and Delefferens, which makes me think it had nothing to do with Jesus delivering us from our sins.

If we look at naming patterns, which I love to do, we find a lot of names repeated from Deliverance's family into my John B's family, while others are conspicuous by their absence. Deliverance's first three sons were Stephen, John, and Jacob, and my John B named three sons Stephen, John, and Jacob. On the other hand, John B did not name any of his sons after his possible dead father Deliverance, nor did he name any daughters after his possible dead mother Judah/Judith. You would think, if both your parents died when you were a child, you would name your children after them.

Would my John B become a Loyalist while his brothers served in the Patriot military? And if so, what pieces would that rip the family into?

Of course, the book says that this John Acker lived in Ossining after the Revolution, so if the book is right, that crosses this John out.

Which brings us to Choice #3, John or Johannis Acker born 1759

In the Old Dutch Church, Johannis Ecker was baptized on 4 September 1759. Jan Ecker, syn kind gedoopt (his child baptized) tells us that his father was Jan. We know that Johannis's mother was Rachel Duythser because she and Jan were married on 20 September 1758. Johannis then gained a sister, named Rachel after her mother, in 1761. After that, there were no more children. Why? Because Jan died.

How do we know Jan died? Because of his father Sybout's will.

In August 1769, when those ungrateful Bostonians were complaining about taxes but no one saw war coming, Sybout wrote his will. He was in good health, but "mindful that it is appointed for all men once to die." After providing for his wife Eleas, he made special bequests: a Gun went to his Grandson John Ackar.

This Grandson John Ackar would be the Johannis Ecker born in 1759. We know that it's not a different grandson because later on in the will, Sybout mentioned "my Grandson, and my Granddaughter Rachel Ackar, the Son and Daughter of my Son John deceased."

Johannis's sister Rachel's life is well documented. Her husband was a Revolutionary War hero, and they had to reapply for a veteran's or widow's pension every time the pension law changed. Their file has so many pages, I gave up reading after my eyes crossed from decoding "deponent" scribbled in too many different handwritings.

From the pension file, we learn that Rachel married Jacob Cypher on the day after Christmas 1784, when the war was over. Their witness was the groom's brother. No mention of her family was made, as if they were dead or fled the country, but of course they could have been there. Rachel didn't even remember what month she was married in, always saying Fall of 1784. It was William Cypher the Best Man who recollected it was on a Sunday between Christmas and New Year's. They all swore there was no record of the marriage; apparently none of them thought to check the church.

I was floored at what Rachel's husband Jacob lived thru. He seems to have been in a company in the American lines that was called into service whenever the Continental Army was busy elsewhere. During

I was floored at what Rachel's husband Jacob lived thru. He seems to have been in a company in the American lines that was called into service whenever the Continental Army was busy elsewhere. During his third tour, he and his family battled who could very well have been my other ancestor, Jeremiah Rushton.15

Altho Rachel and her pension file show up in many public family trees, brother Johannis Acker does not appear on any of them beyond his baptism.

So is a John Acker who is lost to records after age ten, when he inherits a gun in his grandfather's will, likely to be my John Acker, who sided with the British and evacuated to Nova Scotia before his sister Rachel got married? If so, my John is on the opposite side of a war zone from his sister's future husband. Was he also thus estranged from his sister?

This John fits in perfectly with my John B. The only thing I don't like is that John B didn't name any of his children after his grandfather Sybout, or mother and sister Rachel. Johannis didn't have any relatives named Catherine, Stephen, or Jacob, yet those are the names my John B gave his kids.

Without more records, I may never know which one John B really was. But I do know that Hester and each of her possible husbands gave up their birth families. No Krankheyts or other Ackers landed in Shelburne.

The Revolutionary War was a civil war before the Civil War. Neighbors and even families were divided in their beliefs. Even a famous Founding Father like Benjamin Franklin had a divided family - his son William was the royal governor of New Jersey. This has really brought home to me the tragedy of the Revolution: the Civil War at least pitted region against region. But in the Revolution, your enemy could be on the next farm, in the next street, or even sleeping in the next bedroom. And if they didn't kill you, you may have to kill them.

I never thought about that before - when Esther and John B. Acker came with their little boy and baby girl, they left behind their parents and their siblings. I guess all immigrants expect to never see their family again, but did they write each other, or did they consider each other to be traitors?

When the war split America from England, not only did we lose family records, but people lost each other. Between destruction and discord, we may never know which family John B left behind.

Which John do you think he is?

Many gravestones from before the Revolution line up in the Old Dutch Churchyard in Sleepy Hollow. Just not the ones I'm looking for. Photo by author, June 2024

FOOTNOTES

1. *Anglican Church Records, Shelburne County Archives*

2. *http://www.christchurchshelburne.ca/our-history/*

3. *Descendants of John B. Acker and Esther Crank, unpublished manuscript, Shelburne Genealogical Society and Archives, Barrington, NS, https://www.shelburnecountyarchives.ca/*

4. *John Acker in entry for Samuel Davenport, New York, p. 215, Coldham, Peter Wilson. American Migrations 1765-1799: The lives, times, and families of colonial Americans who remained loyal to the British Crown before, during and after the Revolutionary War, as related in their own words and through their correspondence. Baltimore, MD, USA: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2000, Ancestry.com database American (Loyalist) Migrations 1765-1799*

5. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philipsburg_Manor*

6. *Catherine Shultz in Nova Scotia Births, Marriages, and Deaths, death number: 1816-00058, https://archives.novascotia.ca/vital-statistics*

   Henry Acker in Nova Scotia Births, Marriages, and Deaths, death number: 1816-00026, https://archives.novascotia.ca/vital-statistics

7. *Hester Krankheyt, Baptism, #1650, p. 105, The Register of Baptisms, The Archives of the Reformed Church in America; New Brunswick, New Jersey; Record Book of the Old Dutch Church of Sleepy Hollow; Members, Baptisms, and Marriages, Indices, U.S., Dutch Reformed Church Records from Selected States, 1660-1926, Ancestry.com*

8. *"Walter Cronkhite boat named after one of his Dutch ancestors, Wyntje de Theunis,"1979-08-26, https://www.newspapers.com/article/newsday-nassau-edition/116643732/?xid=637, Newspapers.com - Newsday (Nassau Edition), Hempstead, New York, www.newspapers.com*

9. *Maps of Shelburne 1784, 1894, https://dylansthoughts.home.blog/2019/03/19/reflection-5-settlement-of-shelburne-nova-scotia/*

10. *Entry for John Acker, pp. 23- 24, Burns, Brendon S., The Loyal and Doubtful: Index to the Acts of British Loyalism in the Greater New York and Long Island Area 1775-1783, First Series Vol. 1, Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing, Arlington, VA, 2023*

11. *The Old Sugar House - Trinity Churchyard, https://www.americanwars.org/american-prisoners-revolution/chapter-XV.htm*

    Bittersweet - The American Revolution and New York City's Sugar Industry, https://blog.mcny.org/2015/06/30/bittersweet-the-american-revolution-and-new-york-citys-sugar-industry/

    Daily What?! A Revolutionary War Sugar House Prison Window in Downtown Manhattan, https://www.untappedcities.com/daily-what-revolutionary-war-sugar-house-prison-window-downtown-manhattan/

12. *https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~vantasselfamilyhistoryhomepage/genealogy/oldfamiliesofwestchester/acker.html*

13. *See my post on Andre's capture at Isaac Van Wart, Revolutionary War Hero*

14. *Acker, Benjamin, https://collections.westchestergov.com/digital/collection/mcdonald*

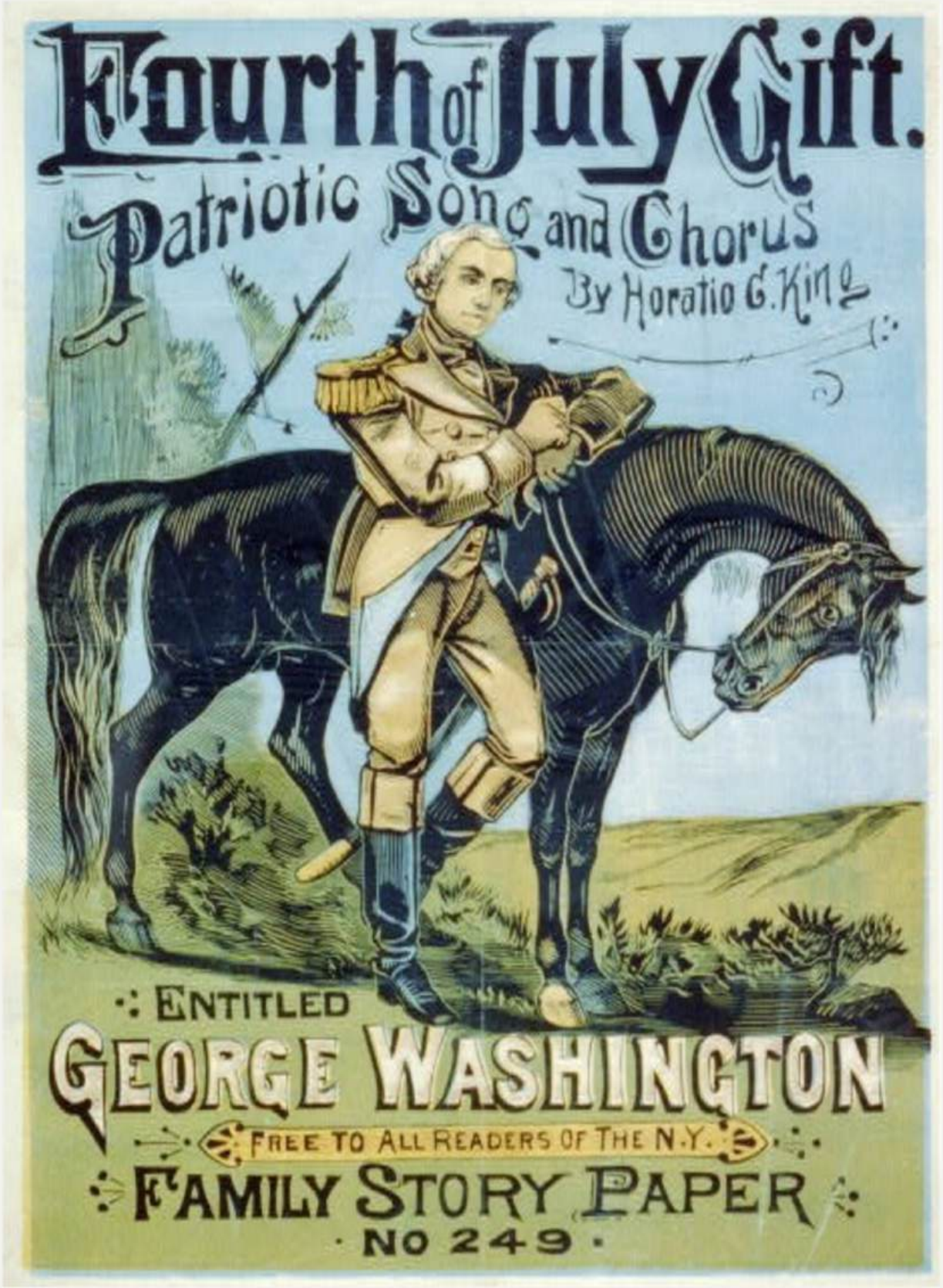
15. *See my post on Jeremiah Rushton at Jeremiah Rushton, Cowboy*

16. *Jacob Cypher in the U.S., Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, 1800-1900*

I used Claude.ai to help me with revisions and edits as I combined 5 blog posts I wrote previously into one Substack post.

Article shared from https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/esther-crank-and-john-b-acker-who

Copyright 2026 Anne Wendel



Fourth of July Gift. Patriotic Song and Chorus by Horatio G. King, entitled George Washington.

Credit: *New York: Family Story Paper, 187/8-? Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2002720038.*

1759–1786

A GERMAN TEENAGER IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

George Rector, my 4xgreat-grandfather, and his convoluted journey to the New World - Stories 250

Anne blogs at Grandma's Granny's Family Album https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com This piece was part of Genealogy Matters Storyteller Tuesday Challenge: HISTORY HAPPENED.

SCAN ME

First Legion figurine in author's possession, photo by author. 1

A baby named Johann Georg Richters was baptized on 10 August 1759, in Wechmar, a town in what is today Thuringia, Germany, but then was part of the German staat Sachsen (Saxony). He was only one day old. His parents were Johann Gottfried Richters and Barbara Christina Hanwin Richters. I think this baby is our Original Rector Ancestor in North America, Franz Georg Richter.

So when we see an 18-year-old named Georg Richter from Saxony on the troop embarkation list for England in May 1776, we can surmise that this baby has become a teenager lying about his age. (Georg is pronounced GAY-orgg).

Military service was one of the best paths to a secure financial future in several of the German staaten. Land was passed down to the eldest son, leaving other sons without many options. The militaries in the northern staaten were so respected, they were hired by other countries to add professionals to their ranks when needed. Georg served in the Electorate of Saxony in the Holy Roman Empire, apparently in his teenage years. When the British government started looking for troops to supplement their own in suppressing a colonial rebellion, Georg was already a seasoned veteran.

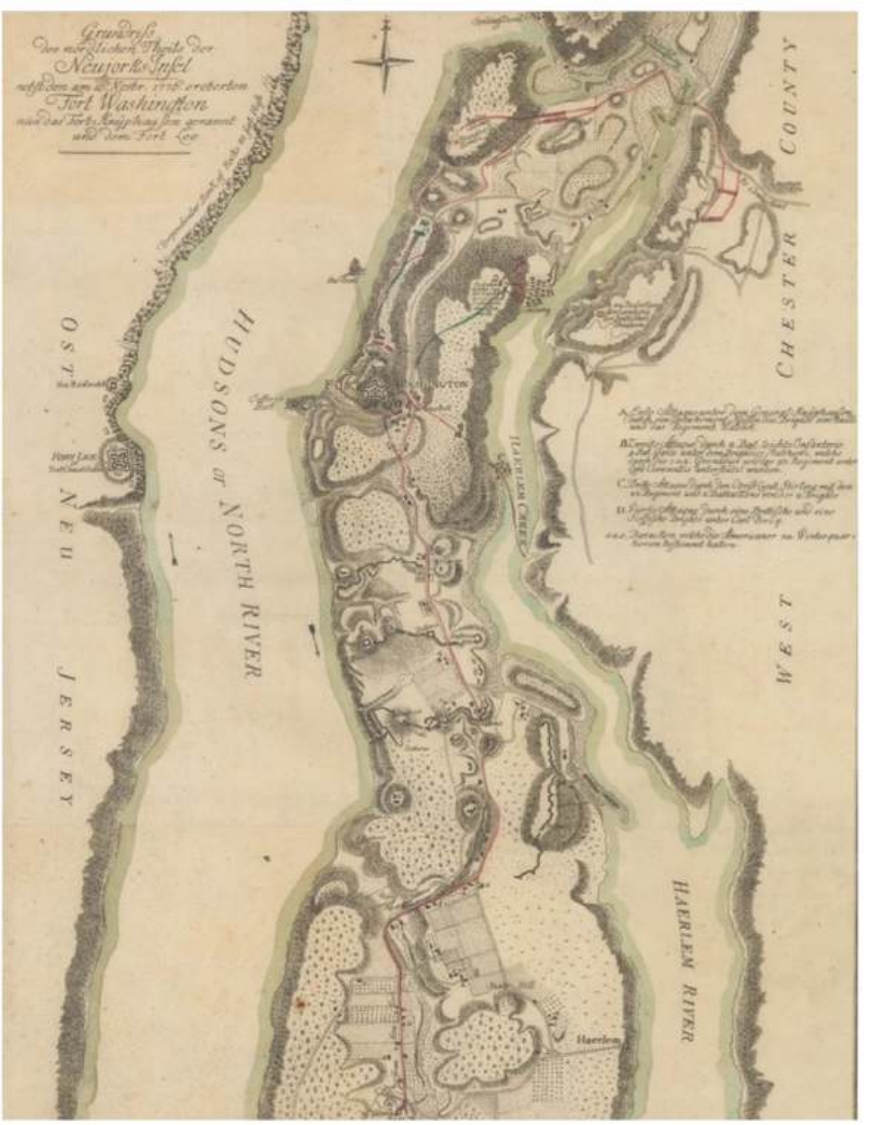
Most of the professional soldiers the British hired were from Hesse, so any German soldier in the American Revolution has come to be called a Hessian. But Georg was no Hessian. The British government started preparing for war before independence was even declared, in Autumn 1775. They commissioned Colonel Georg von Scheither from Hannover, a German staat near Wechmar, to raise 4000 troops from all German staaten to complement the British regiments. Almost 2000 went to Dover, England, in small groups to be viewed,

The village church in Wechmar. 2

The port of Stade. 3

Arriving in New York on October 20, 1776, Scheither's recruits were distributed into many different regiments, about 40 each, and then evenly spread among each regiment's 10 companies. Georg was enlisted in the 38th Regiment of Foot, under commander Sir Robert Pigot, on October 21. With only 4 German speakers in the whole company, Georg must have learned English pretty fast, and he Anglicized his name to George Rector.

The 38th operated in the New York City - New Jersey - Long Island - Pennsylvania area. Georg's first action was the successful attack on Fort Washington in northern Manhattan, which chased the rebels out of New York for the duration of the war. On 9/11, 1777, while the main regiment remained in New York City, parts called the flank coys participated in routing General Washington's army in the Battle of Brandywine, resulting in the British capture of Philadelphia.



Revolutionary War map of New York island north of Harlem by Gabriel Nikolaus Raspe, 1777. *The Battle of Fort Washington.*

Having chased Washington out of the New Jersey area of New Brunswick and Piscataway, the 38th resided there until June 1778. That summer, the Americans and French combined tried to take Newport, Rhode Island, which the British held. The 38th was among the regiments sent to reinforce Newport, and fought in the Battle of Rhode Island in August. The remainder of the war was spent in Flushing, Bedford Heights, and Jamaica, Long Island; Camp Valentine Hill, Westchester; and Haarlem Heights, Manhattan; all British-held or -friendly areas.

The last battle George fought in was due to the bad attitude of traitor Benedict Arnold. He decided to raid New London, Connecticut for show. The city was destroyed by 1700 troops, with the 38th among them; luckily most inhabitants had been warned and fled. Rebel soldiers guarding the fort refused to surrender; when they finally did, they were killed anyway. Benedict Arnold was universally condemned for the brutality of the attack and the high loss of life on both sides.

After winning all these battles and losing none, the British soldiers may have been surprised to find themselves defeated. No battles

Evacuation Day, November 25, 1783

were fought in the next two years, and although the troops in the southern colonies began to withdraw, New York remained heavily fortified. But Sir Guy Carleton had arrived to manage the withdrawal. The 38th went home to England, but at least 84 of their members chose to stay in the New World. Between the lack of opportunity in Germany, the lush orchards of Long Island, and the attractions of democracy, many German soldiers did.

On the other hand, maybe the promise of free land in Canada was the main reason. On the 25th of August 1783, George Rector transferred, still as a private, into the 57th Regiment of Foot. The muster rolls of the 38th show that he was discharged on the 7th of September, but at the time, it was customary to pay the soldiers an extra week to "carry them home." In September or October, the 57th sailed for Nova Scotia. George remained with the regiment for another 3 years, until 5 July 1786.

Afterwards, George was ready to set out on his new life in the New World: find a wife to start a big family with, find acreage of his own to farm. He was to say on his land grant application that he was well acquainted with the business of farming, so he had probably worked the land alongside his family in Wechmar. Nova Scotia was a big place, wide open, with lots of land that needed people to fill it and till it.

Who is up for a trip to Germany?

Wechmar today, from Google Maps: https://maps.app.goo.gl/S2NAYGbZbcnLbWtL7

FURTHER READING

- *https://www.historycentral.com/Revolt/NY.html*
- *https://www.battlefields.org/learn/revolutionary-war/battles/fort-washington*
- *https://www.wikiwand.com/en/38th_(1st_Staffordshire)_Regiment_of_Foot*
- *http://www.uelac.org/Loyalist-Trails/2015/Loyalist-Trails-2015.php?issue=201538*
- *http://www.royalprovincial.com/military/army/38service.htm*
- *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Rhode_Island*
- *https://www.ctexplored.org/benedict-arnold-turns-and-burns-new-london*

Article shared from https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/a-german-teenager-in-the-american

FOOTNOTES

1. *First Legion figurine in author's possession, photo by author*
2. *https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wechmar_Dorfkirche.JPG*
3. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stade#/media/File:Stade_2006,_Hansehafen.jpg*

Copyright 2026 Anne Wendel

MAUREEN TAYLOR

Maureen Taylor, The Photo Detective ® helps clients with photo related genealogical problems. She's made appearances on The View, The Today Show, Pawn Stars, and others.

She blogs from both Substack.com/@photodetective, and her website at https://maureentaylor.com/

SCAN ME

1760–1851

GEORGE FISHLEY

"Our own are the last eyes that will look on men who looked on Washington..."

Historian Benson Lossing in his The Last Men of the Revolution (1864) wrote: " Our own are the last eyes that will look on men who looked on Washington, our ears the last that will hear the living voices of those who heard his words. Henceforth, the American Revolution will be known among men by the silent record of history alone."

That may be true, but that doesn't mean we can't look at the faces of the men, women, and children who lived during the American Revolution. By focusing on all the people alive in that period, we get a sense of their times. Photographs, engravings, paintings, and manuscripts provide insights into their world. Time travel, unfortunately, isn't real, but that list of items can transport us into the past. Ask a genealogist.

Lossing's work is part historical narrative and a travelogue. He sought out male survivors and the structures that still existed in 1864. It's a fascinating book.

In the twenty-plus years that I've been trying to locate images and information, I've felt shadowed by these individuals.

On a trip to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, hoping to locate my 2x great-grandmother's grave, I got lost in the cemetery. It stretched for what felt like miles. After wandering around, I stopped. Frustrated by not being able to find it. I looked down.

I was standing in front of George Fishley's grave.

Fishley's daguerreotype is in the collection of the Portsmouth (NH) Historical Society.

It's a fantastic image, and you can view the image and the note in the case at their CatalogIt page. (*https://hub.catalogit.app/portsmouth-historical-society/folder/entry/captain-george-fishley-1850*)

Edited digital image uploaded to WikiTree on 27 Nov 2018 by Cheryl Givens, (https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Givens-1286)

Article shared from https://photodetective.substack.com/p/the-250th-george-fishley-1760-1851

Copyright 2026 Maureen Taylor

This is one of at least four known images of him taken on the same day. "Capt.n George Fishley is 90 years on this his birthday, June 11, 1850. He called at the house this afternoon." The note goes on to describe his death and was written by Groge Pearse of Portsmouth, NH.

In 1847, Fishley was among the three surviving Revolutionary War veterans who met President Polk during his visit to Portsmouth in July of that year. The other two veterans were Mark Green and George Long. There were six Revolutionary War veterans living in the area. No known photographs of the other five exist.

An article in the Portsmouth Journal (January 4, 1851), written after his death, explained his attire. "For many years he has on public occasions appeared conspicuously in the processions in a cocked-hat which almost vied in years with the wearer."

***Amerique Septentrionale**. created by Rigobert Bonne, an engineer and hydrographer of the French Navy. It was published in 1780 by Jean-Leonard Pellet. The map, an uncolored copper engraving, measures 32 cm in width and 22 cm in height.*

***Credit**: David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~252951~5518702:Amerique-Septentrionale*

1760–1799

TOYPURINA. 1760–1799. TONGVA KIZH.

Carole is a retired LAUSD educator, married to her hero, loving their 3 kids and best friend Tootsie in the South Bay. She blogs as MamaCarole at https://slottedspheres.substack.com

SCAN ME

Activist. Medicine Shaman labeled a witch. She led a rebellion [at least she was present] against Spanish colonists and San Gabriel Missionaries during the 1785 revolt in Southern California

Photo by Adam Roguljic on Unsplash (https://unsplash.com/@rogulad)

July 4, 2026 is a pretty big anniversary for America

Inspired by Barbara at Projectkin and Stories250, I've been thinking about life where I live, 250 years ago. Back then Southern California was occupied by indigenous families and Spanish conquistadors and their families.

The Greater Los Angeles County and San Gabriel Valley Areas 250 Years Ago

- **1776** United States of America was founded; from colonies to country.
- **1781** Representing Spain 44 people of a mixture of Mexican (Sinaloa, Sonora), Indian, Spanish, African descent settled into Los Angeles. The 44 people were 11 men, 11 women, and 22 children. This included 1 priest and 4 soldiers from New Spain (Spanish Mexico).
- **1785** Revolt against San Gabriel Mission which included Toypurina.
- **1850** California was founded.

Timeline of West Coast of North America During Revolution

- **1771** the Franciscan monks settled the Camino Real along the California coastline in a line of missions used to spread the gospel. Some called it heavenly; others genocide.
  ***Some say Venerable Maria de Jesus de Agreda bilocated to this area in the 1600's from Spain. It was proven that she distributed rosaries doing God's work, all while her body was in Spain. [Story to come later.]*
- **1771** September 8th Father Serra founded the San Gabriel Mission.
- **1785** 25 year old Toypurina was captured by the mission guards during an unsuccessful revolt. Some say she led the revolt, but it seems more like she went along for the ride. Toypurina was angry that the colonists just took over the Tongva/Kizh land.

1776 on the West Coast of California

Tovaangar. That's what the Tongva called the 1.5 million acres of land Toypurina and her village lived on as far back as 6000 B.C. They sailed plank canoes on the Pacific ocean to Catalina and paddled willow and reed canoes on the rivers and wetlands of Southern California. They lived on the coast, in the San Gabriel Valley basin and mountains. Their stomping grounds were mine as well.

The Tongva homes were made of the resources nearby: redwood, cedar, willow, clay, tar, grasses all found a place in the daily items and shelters built.

They fished, hunted, and gathered food in the temperate environment now called the greater Los Angeles area, the San Gabriel Valley, and south to Orange County.

Have you visited the ***La Brea Tar Pits***? That's part of Los Angeles's local history. Animals drowned in the tar for eons. Humans have used that tar for eons. The tar pits are timeless. I've attended and led field trips there my entire life.

Carole's reference to the book takes us to San Nicolas Island. Learn more at https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/california-coastal-trail/juana-maria-better-than-nothing-the-strange-tale-of-the-lone-woman-of-san-nicolas-island

Fourth Graders across our nation read ***Island of the Blue Dolphins***. This is about the Last woman of San Nicolas Island during the time of colonization, the missionaries founding missions along the California coastline. Have you read it? Find a copy to read. It portrays the life of Toypurina's contemporary, Karana. It's on my reread list.

SCAN ME

How did I get here?

- **1776** Japan was in the middle of the Edo era of Tokugawa Ieshige Shogun. It was a peaceful time of closed borders.

Truth be told, I'm just beginning to learn why my great-grandparents immigrated to Los Angeles and my grandparents immigrated to Oregon. The maternal side of my family pioneered and lived in the Los Angeles area in the early 1900's with the exception of when they were forcefully removed during WWII. My mother was born in Bell, California in 1938. Her parents were tenant strawberry farmers. My father was born in Vernonia, Oregon in 1934. His family were loggers and railroad men. I'm a third generation Japanese American living in the South Bay of Los Angeles County. I was born in L.A. and grew up across the street from the Gardena Valley Japanese Community Institute during the days of cows and drive through dairies.

Same Place Different Time

As a Californian 4th grade student in the 1970's I chose to create a model of a Chumash dwelling and I wrote a report about the indigenous people living north of Malibu. The fun part was the coconut looking hut I recreated using twigs, plants, and dirt from my backyard. The pebble firepit was most memorable.

On May 6, 2026 I captured images of middle school students processing yucca into twine bracelets. This was also a Tongva activity. Well, I'm not sure they traded yucca twine friendship bracelets, but they made yucca fiber rope to use in their canoes, baskets, etc.

My Stomping Grounds

As a native Southern Californian and retired LAUSD educator, I've studied the geography, environment, and cultures of the people who lived here in the South Bay of Los Angeles County as well as taught about them for decades. My family has played on the same terrain and sea as the indigenous Tongva and Chumash.

Visitors to town are amazed at the size of California. Sometimes they can't believe we can go to the desert, beach, hills, and wooded mountains in a day. Then again, they underestimate how large California is. Some have wanted to visit San Diego in the morning and the Channel Islands that evening.

My children, 5th generation Angelenos, paddled Hawaiian outrigger canoes when they were keiki/children. They belonged to the Marina Del Rey Outrigger Canoe team. Their photograph hung of the wall of King's Hawaiian Bakery & Restaurant near the bathrooms in Torrance. Summers were spent at beaches from Ventura, Marina Del Rey, Dana Point, and more. Catalina has been a special destination, thousands of years ago as well as today. My eldest and my husband

Framed photo on display at King's Hawaiian Bakery and Restaurant, Torrance, March 2026. MamaCarole's 3 children, keiki, are in this image taken pre-award ceremony. MamaCarole's children are currently young adults.

both raced outrigger canoes from Dana Point to Catalina. My daughter's women's team had a blind teen racing with them. They placed 3rd. Marina! Marina! Marina!

Asian basketball is a thing and our twins participated. Many games were played in the San Gabriel Valley. Many memories were made!

My family continues to live out our American dream in the suburbs of Los Angeles's South Bay. Southern California's chapparal, wetlands, and ocean are my image of paradise. The birds, bees, and butterflies are plentiful. Coyotes keep the rats, feral cats, raccoons, skunks, and opossums under control which allows birds to multiply. Recently, the California quail is making a comeback in direct thanks to coyotes.

As I research and remember our American past I can only imagine all of the games and family fun that must have existed here in my sliver of heaven.

Dear readers,

Thank you for joining me as I presented Toypurina of the people that called themselves Tongva, part of the Kizh nations. She's a medicine woman from my neck of the woods, Southern California's San Pedro to San Gabriel and the surrounding area. She suffered during the Spanish expansion into California 250 years ago did her contemporary Karana aka Juana Maria from Island of the Blue Dolphins. I empathize with these ladies. Can you imagine someone squatting in your home?

[Although many of you already know, I shall share my story of housing the homeless later.]

If you have not heard of Karina, the Last Woman of San Nicolas Island or Toypurina of Tongva/San Gabriel I urge you to visit your local library or look them up online. Regardless, I hope you find out for yourself. Please act accordingly.

Hugs and history,

MamaCarole

What are you learning? What are you teaching?

MORE INFORMATION

- *https://fullertonhistory.com/2022/11/17/toypurina-hero-to-the-kizh/*
- *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Angeles_Pobladores*
- *https://stevenhackel.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/sources-of-rebellion_-indian-testimony-and-the-mission-san-gabriel-uprising-of-1785.pdf*
- *https://gabrielinotongva.org/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=232581188 61&gbraid=0AAAAA-8O1gYns0tOTP7sCuNiwY0FPFGt_&gclid=CjwKCAjwgO7RBhBKEiwAZNP85ivIPdusFJ-y-fobOvIH-X4_eLUCdXz2bue4wbbpFBbFVlyAoOkQjRoCzc8QAvD_BwE*

Article shared from https://slottedspheres.substack.com/p/tongva-toypurina-1760-1799

"We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."
T.S. Eliot

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Carole Kuge Kawamura

Linda is an avid genealogy researcher and blogger. She has been a family history researcher since 1979. She blogs daily at https://emptybranchesonthefamily tree.com and has occasionally posted to Substack.

SCAN ME

1760–1835

REVOLUTIONARY WAR SOLDIER JOSES BUCKNAM

Another Unexpected Military Experience

Joses Bucknam, my 5X great grandfather was born on 7 March 1761 in Malden, Middlesex, Massachusetts, the son of James Bucknam and Mary Goddard. In a family of eleven children, Joses was a middle child at #7.

Joses was also of militia age in 1776 when the American Revolution began and I was hoping to find a Revolutionary War ancestor so I could join the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. This was way before the internet age, so research was done in person at libraries and via the U.S. post office. I kept my mail lady very busy!

Joses was not in the DAR Patriot Index so no one had previously joined under any service he might have had so, if I could prove that he served, a new Patriot Ancestor would be added to the database.

Youngsters have no real idea about war and Joses was probably like most other young men in Medford. After the Battle of Lexington and Concord on 19 April 1775 and with all of the pro-independence families in town, Joses must have been chomping at the bit, waiting to do his part because he enlisted for a three year term as a private in Captain Child's Company, part of Colonel Greaton's 3rd Massachusetts Regiment on 3 March 1777, a few days before his sixteenth birthday.

His service was somewhat fluid with men being sent where they were most needed because a return of men serving in Lieutenant Stephen Hall's Company, 1st Massachusetts Regiment includes the name of Joses Bucknam on 19 February 1778.

Joses's Army pay accounts show his service pay from 3 March 1777 until 31 December 1779 and mentions that he served in Captain Abijah Child's Company, part of Colonel John Greaton's Regiment and also in Captain Joseph Williams' Light Infantry, also in Col. Greaton's Regiment.

However, records then show that he had deserted! How could this be?

To be fair, there was a lot of chaos happening during the war. Yes, men went AWOL because they had to get back to their families, but then returned voluntarily to service. Others were listed as deserters simply because they were missing after a battle and their whereabouts were unknown. Some of those men had been killed, some taken prisoner and some simply separated from their companies during the altercations.

What happened to Joses?

He actually applied for a military pension in the early 1818 group of men and he had a story to tell. His actual pension file documents aren't the easiest to read with a combination of not-so-great cursive and some blurry images. However, descendants had written for information about Joses' war service and there is a typed response from the National Archives clerk who abstracted information.

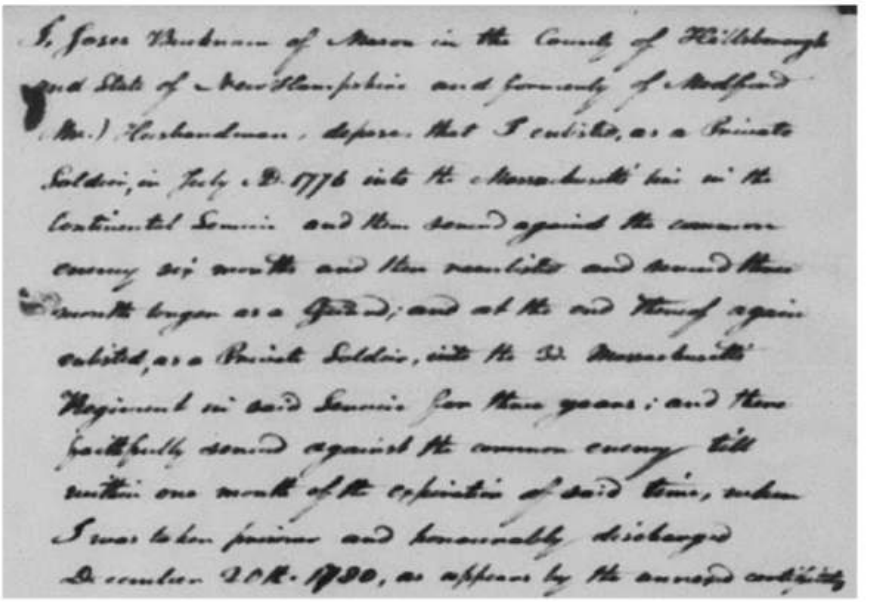
His initial military experience occurred when he was only fifteen years old:

While a resident of Medford, Massachusetts, he enlisted in July 1776, and served six months as private in Captain Hall's Massachusetts company, on the expedition to Ticonderoga, after which he en-

While a resident of Medford, Massachusetts, he enlisted in July 1776, and served six months as private in Captain Hall's Massachusetts Company, on the expedition to Ticonderoga. . . .

The "Captain Hall" from Massachusetts who was at Ticonderoga is further identified in other records as Lieutenant Stephen Hall. Joses' mentioned General Burgoyne. That siege took place from 2-6 July 1777 and ended with British victory.

Joses' original deposition:



I, Joses Bucknam of Mason in the County of Hillsborough and State of New Hampshire and formerly of Medford Ma) Husbandman, depose that I enlisted as a Private soldier in July AD 1776 into the Massachusetts' line in the Continental Service and then served against the common enemy six months and then reenlisted and served three months longer as a Guard, and at the end thereof again enlisted, as a Private Soldier, into the 3d Massachusetts Regiment in said Service for three years: and then faithfully served against the common enemy till within one month of the expiration of said time, when I was taken prisoner and honorably discharged December 20th, 1780, as appears by the annexed certificate.

ts company, on the expedition to Ticonderoga, after which he en-
ted and served four months as guard at Fort Hill in Boston, officers
named. He enlisted March 3, 1777, for three years, served as priva

Joses further explained that his service as a "Guard" was at Fort Hill in Boston. This fort wasn't the site of any real skirmishes, but it was located on a hill overlooking Boston, which made it strategically important during the war.

His final enlistment for a three year term is dated 3 March 1777:

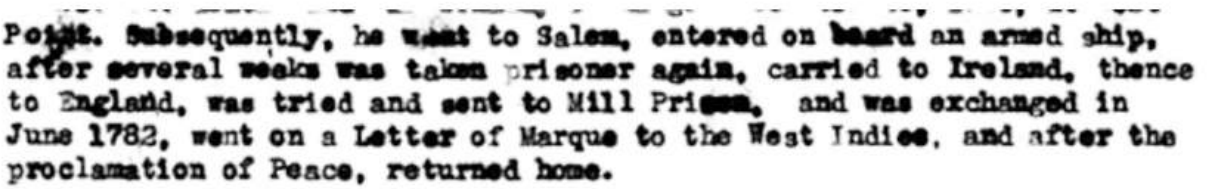
t named. He enlisted March 3, 1777, for three years, served as priv
Captain Childs' company, Colonel Greaton's 3rd Massachusetts regimen
rved in the campaign against Burgoyne, afterwards near White Plains,
sisted in taking Stony Point, was taken prisoner in February 1780,
s carried to New York where he was confined and suffered everything
ost but death" and was finally exchanged December 20, 1780, at West

The Battle of Stony Point took place on 16 July 1779 in Rockland County, New York, just outside of New York City. Interestingly, to me, is that I lived in Wayne, New Jersey, named for General "Mad" Anthony Wayne, who not only commanded this battle, but it was at this time that "Mad" was added to his name due to his actions on the battlefield.

The general suffered a head wound when he was hit by a musket ball. In spite of his injury, he was carried into the fort with his sword ready and the British took heavy losses with 600 men dead compared to 100 patriots.

It was during this enlistment that Joses was taken prisoner in February 1780 and held in New York [City] until he was part of a prisoner exchange on 20 December 1780 at West Point, New York.

Few details are provided about Joses' final days of service, which extended far past the closing of his 3-year enlistment in 1777.


Point. Subsequently, he went to Salem, entered on board an armed ship, after several weeks was taken prisoner again, carried to Ireland, thence to England, was tried and sent to Mill Prison, and was exchanged in June 1782, went on a Letter of Marque to the West Indies, and after the proclamation of Peace, returned home.

Subsequently, he went to Salem [Massachusetts], entered on board an armed ship, after several weeks was taken prisoner again, carried to Ireland, thence to England, was tried and sent to Mill Prison, went on a Letter of Marque [a government license that authorizes private individuals or ships to attack and capture enemy vessels during wartime] to the West Indies, and after the proclamation of Peace, returned home.

These four lines of details don't come close to describing Joses' time as a prisoner of war in the closing years of the Revolutionary War. It was in April 1781 that Joses enlisted to serve on board a 20 gun ship. The "few weeks later" happened in June 1781, when they were defeated by a 36 gun British frigate.

I've crossed the Atlantic in 3000+ passenger cruise ships with stabilizers. I don't think I would have cared much for frigate travel, especially being locked in the bottom of the ship.

The trip to England might well have been the less scary event compared to life in Old Mill Prison.

First, colonial prisoners could be charged with treason, which meant facing possible execution.

Captured officers fared better than enlisted men. As Joses was a private, he didn't enjoy any of the niceties given to those of higher rank. Joses's daily rations consisted of something like one pound of bread, a quart of beer, 3/4 pound of beef and one cup of peas five

times a week. Not only was nutrition there very poor, but the bread was said to have been baked with many straw ends in it. His bed would have been straw on the ground. If he arrived at the prison with any decent clothes still existing, they would have been taken from him and replaced with wornout rags.

Medical care was almost non-existent. Scourges of smallpox killed some of the prisoners, other maladies and injuries brought on the deaths of others.

The only hope for these men was escape or exchange. Even if they escaped, they faced the huge obstacle of where next to go. With no money and no local family or friends to help them, they had little chance of remaining free and even less of a chance to return to the colonies.

It wasn't until 1781 that the British recognized men classified as "prisoners of war." Before then, they were just plain rebels or considered outright criminals. No written record exists today detailing any escape attempts made by Joses, but a year after he was captured, he was part of a prisoner exchange of British and rebel troops. Benjamin Franklin was an integral part of the efforts to successfully implement these exchanges.

Joses stated in his pension affadavit that he was freed in June 1782, but no details are given as to how he arrived back in the colonies and made his way home to his family.

They must have been shocked when Joses appeared!

Joses didn't marry until well after the war ended. On 19 September 1786, he married Abigail Hay of Stoneham, Massachusetts. They were the parents of eleven children, three of whom married and had children. They lived in Medford, Middlesex, Massachusetts until c1794. By February 1795, the birth of son Caleb was recorded in Mason, Hillsborough, New Hampshire, where Joses lived until he died on 18 April 1835.

Abigail survived him by 19 years. She died on 19 September 1854, on what would have been her 58th wedding anniversary, in Glenburn, Penobscot, Maine, where she lived with her daughter Mary Goddard (Bucknam) Scripture's family.

I have visited the graves of both Joses and Abigail. I also established Joses Bucknam as a new Patriot Ancestor in the Daughters of the American Revolution and it was under him that I joined the society.

Looking back at the title of this post – it's difficult to say whether Joses was ever truly a deserter. If he did go AWOL, there must have been a good reason because he returned time and again to fight for American independence until the British were defeated.

Article shared from https://lindastufflebean.substack.com/p/revolutionary-war-soldier-joses-bucknam

Copyright 2026 Linda Stufflebean

MAUREEN TAYLOR

Maureen Taylor, The Photo Detective ® helps clients with photo related genealogical problems. She's made appearances on The View, The Today Show, Pawn Stars, and others.

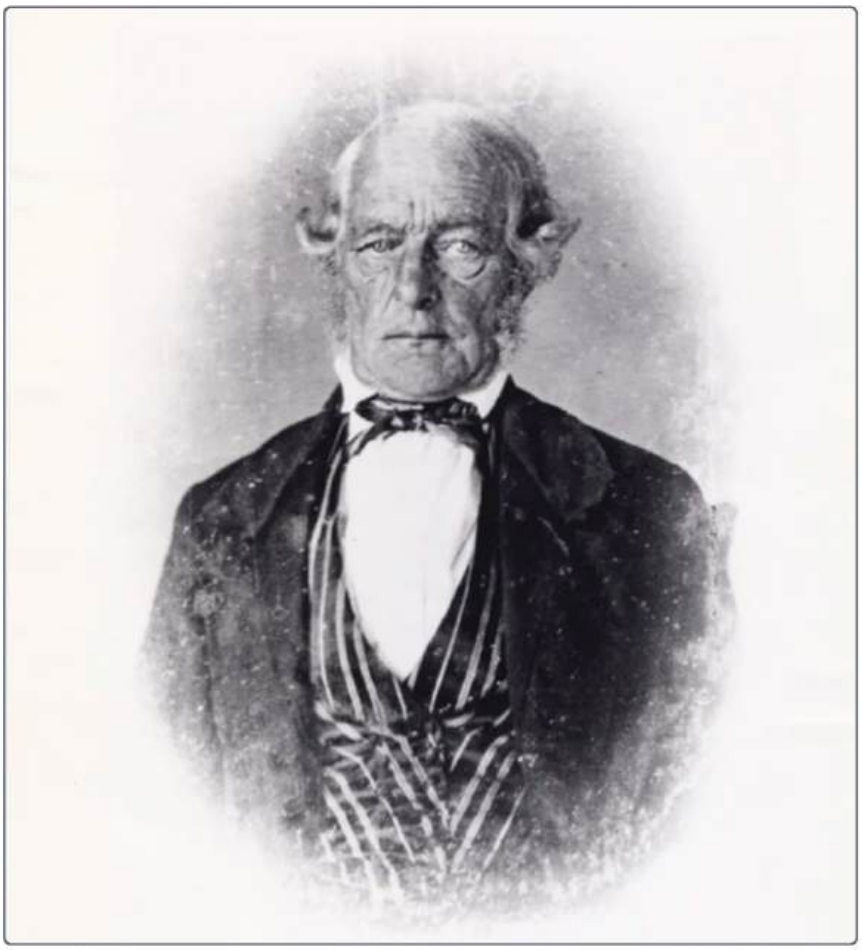
She blogs from both Substack.com/@photodetective, and her website at https://maureentaylor.com/

SCAN ME

1762–1867

JAMES ALLEN JR.

Stories250



MaineMemory.Net #14670 Collections of Maine Historical Society.

For twenty years, James Allen, Jr., son of Malashai and Abigail Allen of Maine, applied for Revolutionary War service, claiming to have enlisted at Fort Griswold, Groton, Connecticut, in September 1782 as a fourteen-year-old fifer. Each time, he was denied. Pension agents and lawyers petitioned on his behalf. It made no difference. The lack of his discharge papers in applying in 1818 and his fuzzy memory in 1858 didn't help his cause. He claimed his discharge papers were stolen. By the 1850's he'd lived long enough that only his much younger brother was his only witness. The testimony of the memories of a then-six-year-old boy in 1782 did little to support his case.

A 1939 letter in his pension file (R12085) states that he never received a pension due to a lack of proof.

The irony of James Allen's persistence is that, despite never receiving a pension, the state of Maine recognized him as its last living Revolutionary veteran.

Article shared from https://photodetective.substack.com/p/stories-250-james-allen-jr-1762-1867

Copyright 2026 Maureen Taylor

ANNE WENDEL

Anne blogs at Grandma's Granny's Family Album https://grandmasgrannysfamily album.substack.com.

SCAN ME

1762–1828

ISAAC VAN WART: REVOLUTIONARY WAR HERO

When three regular guys stopped the death of a newborn nation - Stories 250

https://www.facebook.com/groups/222465687799420/user/61581431955693

RECORDED TALK

SCAN ME

Flat Isaac travels around his namesake county looking for fun things to do to celebrate America's 250th birthday! Follow him on Facebook!

Of course, he didn't look like this. He looked more like the guy sitting on the rock in plain clothes. Isaac was a militiaman, and they didn't have uniforms, but brought their own supplies from home.

The Capture of Major Andre, 1833 by Asher Brown Durand, Image: Wikipedia.org

What's another word for traitor? Back-stabber? Two-timer? Snake? If you look the word traitor up in the dictionary, the name Benedict Arnold is actually there as a synonym. Not a joke. You know it's really bad if your name has become a word that means selling out your own people.

Benedict Arnold. Henry Bryan Hall / After John Trumbull - From copy of engraving by H.B. Hall after John Trumbull, published 1879. Credit: National Archives and Records Administration.

A legend in my first husband's family was that some ancestor, Isaac Van Wart, had captured Benedict Arnold during the American Revolution. Back in the olden days when all we had for home research were books of encyclopedias, I looked him up. Benedict Arnold was never captured, but lived out his long and unhappy life in England, where he was generally despised as a turncoat to his own people. I threw out the family legend.

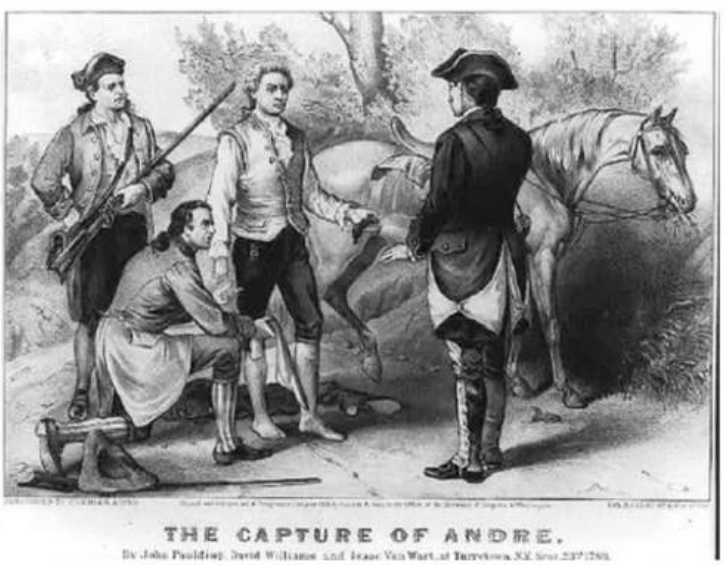
stock photo of throwing the baby out with the bath water

I have since been reminded several times that throwing out family legends results in losing truths that were embedded in the story like rubies in a silicone ring.

In connecting with a genealogist relative, I found that our ancestor Isaac had truly saved the fledgling United States from being snuffed out before it was even born. Isaac and friends foiled the plot that would have turned the American fort West Point over to the British and likely cost the war.

Isaac is so revered, he has a statue, five streets, and a county named after him.1 He even has a Flat Isaac who travels around his namesake county, looking for fun things to do! After his laudable deed, so many Van Warts named their babies Isaac that it is now impossible for my family to trace our ancestors, as we cannot figure out which of the many new Isaacs is the connecting link.

September 23, 1780

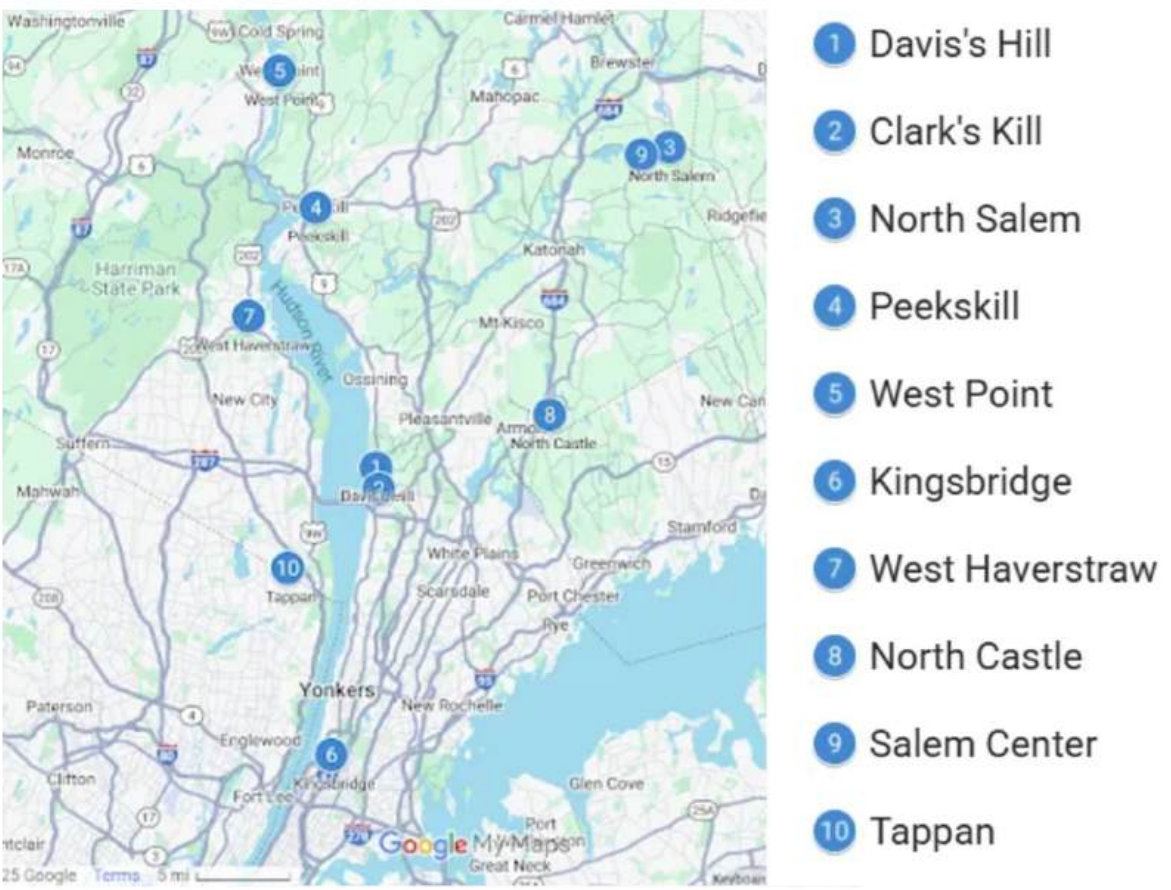


The Capture of Andre', lithograph by Currier and Ives, 1876

The day that saved the new United States began just like any other day in no-man's-land. Tense. Wary. A frigid winter followed by summer days of red smoky haze2 may have made sign-searching people wonder if the Almighty was warning Americans they would be punished for rebelling against their God-given king. Men had taken to patrolling their neighborhoods to prevent violent raids, or at least alert people in time to run or hide. Or were the patrollers and raiders one and the same? It was hard to tell.

Everyone with good sense, or a place to go, had left Westchester County, New York State. Wealthy farms bursting with crops a few short years ago were now fields of ashes. Sturdy barns full of livestock had become shells with cellars where people hid. Spacious houses filled with large families turned into soldiers' quarters. Roads that had seen travellers and wagons constantly transporting goods to and from the city were empty, except for horses galloping towards danger.

The population had dropped by two-thirds.3 Loyalists had taken refuge in British-held New York City. Patriots had moved toward the western frontier, or joined General George Washington's Continentals.4



Important Places in the Prevention of Treachery, map created by the author on Google My Maps

Westchester County became a wasteland because it was officially Neutral Ground. The twenty miles between Kings Bridge, the north point of British New York City, and Peekskill, where Washington's army camped, was supposed to be a buffer between the two armies. In practice, no governing body policed this area, resulting in violence that was answered by retaliation.5

This monument in Patriot Park, Tarrytown, marks the spot where the militiamen searched the spy, postcard published by Russell & Lawrie, 1905-1910

Capture

Anyone still in Westchester on September 23, 1780, would have thought it just another day in the chaos. Morning dawned dry after a mild night when a man could be comfortable wearing a light coat. The seven militiamen patrolling on the night of the 22nd wore their own clothes and carried their own guns. Like everyone else in Neutral Ground, their clothes were worn out and patched up, since no one would be shopping in the city even if they had any money. One of them wore an old soldier's coat he had found somewhere, probably off a dead Hessian.6

The group held a permit to search for stolen cattle.7 They moved south from North Salem, and four of them dropped off at Davis Hill, leaving Isaac Van Wart, 20, David Williams, 25, and John Paulding, 22, to continue on to Clark's Kill, a brook just north of Tarrytown.8

No one had any idea that while they watched the roads, two men conspired in a house across the river.

One to serve his country; the other to betray it.

> *Daybreak eases in behind clouds.9 Now that they can see, the three patrollers start a card game in the woods just off the post road. About nine o'clock, hoofbeats approach.10 The clouds part to allow sunlight to shine11 on a man wearing civilian clothes riding an ordinary horse. But something, his military bearing perhaps, sparks their suspicion. Of course, it is likely they stop every stranger to demand their name and business.*
>
> *The stranger notices John Paulding's Hessian coat. Since German soldiers from Hesse have been hired by the British to fight with them in New York, this proves to the stranger that the three militiamen are loyal to their king. He has been told the area is full of Loyalists, so he identifies himself as a British Army officer.12*

The tense encounter now crackles with danger. The three men identify themselves as Continentals and slowly surround the stranger.

Officer Unknown quickly switches stories. "Huzzah! I was told you were all damned Tories here! Of course such gentlemen as yourselves are brave Americans. Of course I'm not a British officer -- I have no uniform as you can see. My name is John Anderson. I am a friend of the esteemed General Benedict Arnold -- see, I have a pass."

John Anderson, as he says his name is now, smiles broadly and produces a safe pass signed by the famous American General Arnold, commander of the nearby fort West Point. "Permit Mr. John Anderson to pass the guards; to the White Plains' or below, if he chuses, he being on public business by my direction."13

Only John Paulding can read.14 "What does it say?" Isaac asks.

"It's a pass all right," John Paulding answers. "Signed by General Arnold."

"I don't trust him," David frowns, nodding toward the horseman.

"Search him, lads," John Paulding commands, and motions to the stranger named John Anderson to dismount.

"No need, good sirs," the stranger counters. "I pray you send me on my way. I have important business in the city."

"Your business can wait." The three Westchester men drag the stranger off his horse into the trees, but take care not to injure him. Isaac and David remove his clothes while John Paulding oversees with his gun cocked. A constant stream of "the general himself sent me" and "without delay" and "I beg of you" punctuate the disrobing.

"The boots too."

"Would you have me barefoot on the ground?"

Isaac holds up a boot and shakes it; papers fall out. "Ho, what's this?" He hands the papers to John Paulding.

"Search every inch of him."

John Paulding turns the papers over in his hands. A map of some kind. Another seems to be about a fort. Then more papers, just fiddle faddle. He cannot make out what they mean.

"He's a spy!" David Williams asserts. "Why else would he be hiding papers in his boot?"

"What shall we do with him?" Isaac questions.

"Turn him over to Colonel Jameson," John Paulding decides.

The stranger changes tactics again. "Wait now, no sense in being hasty. I can make you gentlemen rich. I have money in the city; I can offer you a considerable amount. Just release me."

"What kind of men do you take us for?" David demands.

"I understand you don't believe me," the caught spy wheedles. "Of course you don't, you are intelligent men. Just take me to Kings Bridge. Release me there. I have money there I can give you. One hundred guineas. Nay, one hundred guineas apiece."

" 'No, by God, even if you give us ten thousand guineas, you should not stir a step!' " roars John Paulding.15

The three militiamen tie the spy up and drag him to Lieutenant Colonel John Jameson at the nearest Continental Army outpost, a few miles away near North Castle.16

Not the map in the spy's boot, but a French map of West Point drawn the same year, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedict_Arnold

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Jameson_(colonel)

Decision

Sunlight17 falls in squares on the table as Jameson spreads the papers out, frowning. He picks up one, reads it carefully. Sets it down, chooses another. Divides them into four sets. Rereads the first. Sighs heavily. Rearranges the piles. There are only two clear facts: all are in General Arnold's handwriting. Jameson has served under Arnold and is sure of this.18

Secondly, the map is of West Point, and one set of papers describes the upgraded fortifications in detail. He places the map and description in the same pile.

The third paper elicits more frowns and a number of sighs. It appears to be minutes of a meeting between General Washington and his subordinate generals. Nothing to do with West Point. Shaking his head, Jameson sets that aside.

As he handles the safe pass describing John Anderson as known to General Arnold, Jameson takes long strides across the floor. The note is brief, yet vague. Permission to go anywhere he "chuses?" It seems odd, yet it is definitely Arnold's handwriting. Perhaps he wrote in haste.
What to do?

It appears to Jameson that his former commander Arnold wants these documents delivered, so delivered they will be, he decides. He has followed many an order from General Arnold, and tho Arnold is no longer Jameson's direct superior, Jameson is proud to serve him. All Arnold's men are.19 But whence to deliver them, and to whom?

The fly in the ointment is the suspicious stranger on horseback with his shifting stories. He is certainly not to be trusted.

Jameson mulls the possibilities. General Arnold could be sending the documents to General Washington, who may desire details on West Point's battle readiness. Or the spy could have stolen the papers somehow, and is taking them to the enemy British. Or perhaps the spy plans to sell the information in the city? Surely it would fetch a good price with potential buyers among the enemy. Or the spy could be a double agent, trusted by Arnold but working with the enemy.20

Jameson decides on a three-fold plan. He will send the documents to General Washington, as seems to be the intention. Let the General figure out what is going on. He will send the spy to West Point where he can be held in a secure location. And thirdly, he will send word to General Arnold to let him know what's happened.21

Jameson sends two parties out at the same time -- a five-soldier guard with the prisoner and the explanatory letter to General Arnold, and an express messenger to find Washington.22

Since Washington was actually travelling to West Point at that hour, passing fairly close by, his message should have arrived first. But the messenger missed him altogether.23

Major Benjamin Tallmadge, painting by John Trumbull, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Tallmadge

Delivery and Disappearance

That evening, American Major Benjamin Tallmadge returns to his post near North Castle from reconnoitering with the 2nd Regiment of Light Dragoons.24 As the men remove their soaked outer garments, wet from sweat and a sudden thunderstorm,25 they hear talk of three young men who captured a spy carrying incriminating papers. Tallmadge immediately leaves the stable to confer with his commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Jameson.

> *"Pardon my dress, sir. What is this I hear? A spy captured bearing papers?"*
>
> *Jameson leans forward, palms resting on the table. "Yes, Major. Three militiamen brought him in this morning, mounted. We have the horse. He wore civilian clothes. They found papers in his boot! Quite the puzzle."*
>
> *"May I see the papers, sir?"*
>
> *"I've sent them to General Washington." Jameson rapidly begins to describe the documents.*
>
> *"A map?" Tallmadge's voice is sharp.*
>
> *"Yes! Clearly of West Point. With the particulars of its defenses."*
>
> *"Battle plans," Tallmadge muses. "Who would want to attack West Point? The British in New York. Who therefore needs to know details of the fort? The British in New York. Who is sending these details? General Arnold."*
>
> *"General Arnold would never betray his country!" Jameson exclaims.*

"Certainly not!" Tallmadge leans forward. "What did the note say again? Let John my friend go wheresomever he chooses? On my business?"

" 'John Anderson.' It did not say a friend," Jameson points out.

"In General Arnold's handwriting, you say. Why would the General send a spy to New York with plans of West Point?" Tallmadge asks slowly.

"General Arnold is an honorable officer!" Jameson declares.

"He is among our best," Tallmadge agrees. "Now, where is the prisoner?"

"Yes, assuredly he is. I sent the prisoner to West Point with a letter. We have no place to hold him here for long!"

"With a letter, sir?" Tallmadge inquires gently.

Jameson feels the subordinate officer's disapproval. "By all means. I must let the General know what has happened!-- his courier did not get thru."

"All well if the note reaches General Arnold. But the prisoner...suppose the traitor helps him to escape?"

Tallmadge begins to stride around the room. "If someone at West Point is a traitor..." He sees the disbelief on Jameson's face. "..a man of low rank, perhaps. Perhaps he saw his chance with this John Anderson. The General sent Mr. Anderson a safe pass, the traitor seized it, and gave the pass to the spy instead."

Jameson drums his fingers on the table. "'Tis possible."

Tallmadge looks his superior in the eyes. "Let us suppose, sir, that this traitor sees his spy arrive as a prisoner. He knows he has been found out and flees."

"Perhaps," Jameson considers. "A stable hand, perhaps. Or the stable hand alerts the...traitor." Jameson's mouth twists as if he tastes spoiled food.

"If, sir, perhaps, the most prudent thing was not to have sent the prisoner to the source of the messages, I might go after and return the prisoner, if you were to permit me to do so."

Jameson sighs. At last he nods. "You may go return the prisoner here."

"And the letter explaining the circumstances?" Tallmadge pushes.

"No, that needs to go to General Arnold."

"Sir, if the letter falls into the wrong hands..."

"We will have to take the risk," Jameson asserts. "General Arnold needs to know. You have my permission to intercept the guard with the prisoner and return the spy here. See to it the letter goes on to him at West Point."

"Yes sir." Tallmadge stands immediately, bows, and exits. In his own room, he swiftly writes an order for a courier to take to the prisoner's guards. The order instructs the guards to return the prisoner to New Castle, and following that, carry the letter with information of the day's events to General Benedict Arnold at West Point.

Major Tallmadge retires for the night, but finds sleep eludes him. Every few hours, he emerges to ask the sentries if the guard has made it back with the prisoner. It is not until after daybreak that they arrive, and the man called John Anderson is again brought before the officers of the Continental outpost at North Castle, looking dirtier and more disheveled than before.

The officers, seated at the table, question the prisoner. Hands tied, the prisoner walks back and forth across the floor. Tallmadge leans closer to Jameson and murmurs, "This man has been bred to arms."

"What is your meaning, Major?" Jameson responds.

"Notice his gait. Watch how he turns on his heel to retrace his course across the room." The two men observe the prisoner as he paces with precision.

"A military man," Jameson whispers.

"If his name be John Anderson or not, he is no tradesman. He has been in service to the king from a young age, I'll warrant," Tallmadge declares.

Jameson shakes his head. "Such a man is a danger to us. We have no way to keep him here confined. Take him..."

"He cannot go to West Point."

"No. Take him to Colonel Sheldon's quarters at Salem."26

The letter from Lieutenant Colonel Jameson describing the three militiamen's capture of John Anderson with papers and a map of West Point reached General Benedict Arnold, commander of West Point, on the morning of September 24th.27 Although his troops searched for him the rest of the day, Benedict Arnold mysteriously disappeared.28

Major John Andre', https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Andr

Revelation

Tallmadge conveyed the prisoner to Salem (now Salem Center). Despite his shabby appearance and grave situation, the stranger was a pleasant conversationalist. Tallmadge found himself enjoying the journey. Once arrived, Tallmadge positioned himself where they could continue talking. The stranger became more and more agitated as time went on.

> *The prisoner abruptly stops pacing. "May I make a request? May I have pen, ink, and paper?"29*
>
> *"By all means," Tallmadge returns. He offers the stranger a seat at his own table and passes him the writing implements. The other man dips his pen in the ink and quickly sets down his thoughts, hand racing across the paper, stopping only to blot stray ink. He passes the finished paper over for Tallmadge to read.*
>
> *Tallmadge leans forward to read, then stops short. His eyes are fixed upon the name at the top - General George Washington. Immediately, his eyes move to the signature - Adj. Genl. John Andre'. Tilting his head, Tallmadge stares at his prisoner, then whispers, "Major Andre'?30*
>
> *Andre' inclines his head. "I am he." Andre' is well known in military circles as the adjutant general to Sir Henry Clinton, Commander in Chief of the British Army in America.*
>
> *Tallmadge reads the rest of the letter, in which Andre' identifies himself as an officer and a gentleman, asking to be excused for wearing the clothes of a spy. I am no spy, he explains, but an honorable officer advancing the cause of my country. Andre' suggests being exchanged with Americans the British hold as prisoners.31*
>
> *"It is my honor to make your acquaintance, sir.," Tallmadge says. "Altho not under these circumstances."*
>
> *"Likewise, Major. Two men of equal rank have much in common to discuss. You have me at a disadvantage in these clothes."*
>
> *"I will send for your regimental uniform as soon as possible, sir."32*
>
> *A day or so later, Tallmadge conducts Major Andre' to West Point and then to Headquarters at Tappan. Passing thru the green countryside in the warm sun, riding side-by-side, it is possible to forget the guards in front and back and the terrible reason they have met.*
>
> *"Let us play a game of Questions, " Tallmadge suggests. "We take turns asking each other anything we like, and the other must answer honestly."*
>
> *"I agree, but I will not name anyone," Andre' responds. "Likewise," returns Tallmadge.*
>
> *In this manner, the plot to surrender West Point is revealed.*

"Were you bringing the papers of West Point to British Headquarters in New York City?"

"Yes." 33

Tallmadge feels sick. The sensitive details would be disastrous if they fell into enemy hands; the British would be able to easily take West Point.

"Was there an attack planned on the fort?"

"Yes. If we British hold West Point and New York City, that would sever the Continentals into two parts, New England and the South. Divided, this unnatural rebellion will surely fail."34

Tallmadge feels a slow boil rise up his chest at the thought of the traitor who gave up this intelligence. "Who gave you the papers?"

"I said I would not name names, and I will not."

"Where did you find this traitor?" Tallmadge spits out.

"We did not. He came to us."

"When?"

"Over a year ago."35

Tallmadge sputters, "What? How? Oh...I...who would..." Remembering his peer's terms, he falls silent. Several minutes pass before he asks, "How did you come to receive the papers?"

"I met the man at a house in West Haverstraw the night before I was captured. We spent the night conferring.36 At dawn, I could not return the way I had come. The gentleman of the house lent me these poor clothes, as they said traveling in uniform was unsafe. I crossed the river, but was stopped by three young men.37 Honorable young men. They would not take a sum of money I offered them to release me."

"Yes, it is not only gentlemen who are honorable," Tallmadge points out. "I hope they are rewarded."

"And my reward? I am no spy, sir. I understand I am your prisoner, but I serve my country."

Tallmadge is silent a long time. Finally he says, "Let me tell you a story of a friend of mine. My classmate at Yale College, much loved. We entered the army together in 1776. After the British entered New York, General Washington asked for information on troop strength and so on. My friend volunteered. He was stopped."

Tallmadge stares hard at Andre'. "His name was Nathan Hale. Do you know the sequel to the story?"

"Yes," Andre' replies easily. "He was hanged as a spy. But surely you do not consider his case and mine alike."

> *"Precisely similar. And similar will be your fate."38*
>
> *"But I am an officer of high rank! If I must be executed, I must be shot by firing squad as befits my station. Not hanged like a dog."39*
> *"If I may speak from my heart, sir, I have a most favorable impression of your character and motives.40 Yet the men are much heated over the hanging of Nathan Hale. I feel that will overcome all else."41*

British Major John Andre', Adjutant General to the Commander in Chief, was neither exchanged nor shot. He was hanged a mere nine days after his capture.42

Bust of Isaac Van Wart; life masks made of warm wax were made of prominent figures in the early 1800s

Aftermath

The entire Continental Army was shaken, Washington most of all.43 At West Point the next day, the nagging uneasiness in the back of Washington's mind became the unhappy determination that the brave and dashing General Arnold was indeed a traitor. "Treason of the blackest dye was...discovered!" Washington wrote in issuing his General Orders for the day.44

If the popular Arnold could turn, what did that say about the other soldiers?45 What did it say that no one suspected treason afoot for an entire year? The only ones quick-witted enough to smell a rat were three ordinary young farmers in the militia.

Not only were they quick-witted, they were incorruptible, having turned down Andre's offer of a bribe. "I do not know the party that took Major André," Washington wrote in his report. However, he called them "men of great virtue" for refusing a large amount of money to let Andre' go.46

Washington recommended to Congress that "the public will do well to make them a handsome gratuity."47 Congress, known for responding to Washington's requests with silence or delay, instead voted within a month to give each man an incredible life pension of two hundred dollars per year, issued in coin, not the continental paper bills that would become worthless. Congress also ordered three silver medallions of the capture, which Washington presented in a ceremony witnessed by selected units of the Continental Army. Paulding, Williams, and Van Wart were given copies of a resolution conveying the thanks of Congress "for their fidelity and the eminent service they had rendered their country."48 Washington even entertained the men for dinner in his tent.49

Not only that, but the New York state legislature awarded each man two hundred acres of farmland. As was the custom of the New York militia, they were given André's confiscated property - his watch worth thirty guineas, horse, saddle, and bridle.50

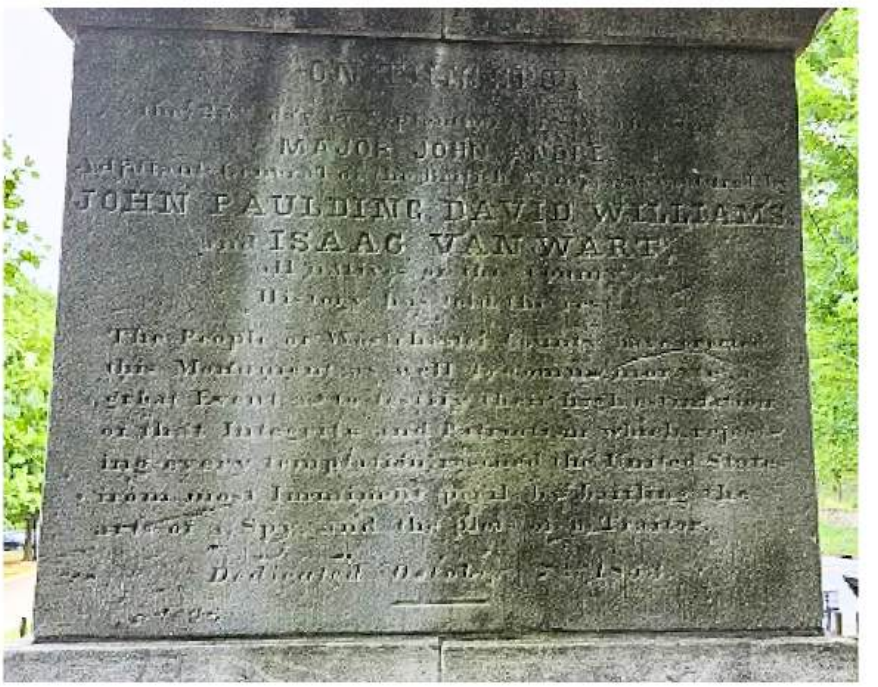
The story of Isaac Van Wart, David Williams, and John Paulding captured the new nation's attention. It fit perfectly with the founding myth of a small poor people with integrity defeating a large arrogant empire. Founding Father Alexander Hamilton wrote about them. Their exploit inspired songs, plays, paintings, and magazine articles. It made appearances in books, including The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, which after all was set in the same town where Andre' was captured. The famous biography of George Washington by Parson Weems, in which the cherry tree story first appeared, devoted five pages to the three militiamen. When Ohio became a state, it named three counties Van Wert (spelled wrong), Williams, and Paulding.

Ancestor Isaac and his co-captors remained idols in popular culture for eighty years, until the Civil War brought new folk heroes.51

Isaac Van Wert Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution, https://thevwindependent.com/news/2025/11/24/busts-unveiled

At the monument to Andre's captors, Patriot Park, Tarrytown, NY, June 2024

Their conduct merits our warmest esteem.
They have prevented in all probability our
suffering one of the severest strokes that
could have been meditated against us.
- George Washington



photos by author, June 2024

REFERENCES

- *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedict_Arnold*
- *https://isaacvanwartdar.org/the-busts-of-a-trio-of-heroes-from-the-revolutionary-war-center-of-attention-at-van-wert-reveal-party-america250/*
- *https://isaacvanwartdar.org/ https://sleepyhollowcountry.com/the-capture-of-john-andre/*
- *https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-28-02-0201-0001*
- *https://villageofhaverstraw.gov/about-the-village/*
- *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Tallmadge*
- *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Jameson_(colonel)*
- *https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/21/arts/benedict-arnold-medal-west-point-andre.html*
- *https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/van-wert-the-ohio-city-thats-name-is-wrong/?ipid=promo-link-block1*
- *https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61581431955693*
- *https://sites.google.com/historicalvanwert.com/flatisaacvanwart*
- *https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61581431955693*
- *https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/van-wert-3d-printed-bust-ties-small-ohio-city-to-its-past/*

FOOTNOTES

1. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_Van_Wart*
2. *Tufts, Cotton. Letter to John Adams, 1779-1780. "Enclosure No. 1: Weather Journal, 1779–1780," Founders Online, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-03-02-0285-0002. [Original source: The Adams Papers, Adams Family Correspondence, vol. 3, April 1778–September 1780, ed. L. H. Butterfield and Marc Friedlaender. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973, pp. 383–386.]. Also, Evans, Chad. June 7 2023. Local Weather History: The Dark Day of 1780 in New England and Black Sunday of 1950 and How It's All Tied to our Weather. https://www.wlfi.com/news/local-weather-history-the-dark-day-of-1780-in-new-england-black-sunday-of-1950/article_53b3640e-057d-11ee-9508-0fea9a3ce839.html. Accessed December 2025*
3. *Schenawolf, Harry. First Cowboys Were Not from the West But Cattle Rustlers of the American Revolution. 1 July 2019. https://revolutionarywarjournal.com/first-cowboys-were-not-of-western-lore-but-from-new-york-loyalist-partisan-groups-terrorized-farmers-during-the-american-revolution/. Accessed December 2025. - Jenkins, Stephen. "The Cowboys, The Skinners, And the Neutral Ground." New York State Historical Association. Vol. IX. (1910) pp 160- Published by the New York State Historical Association, Glens Falls Publishing and Printing, Glens Falls, NY.*

4. *Schenawolf.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. *G., Emma. The Capture of John Andre'. Sleepy Hollow Country. Accessed December 2025.*

7. *Brown, Richard C. Three Forgotten Heroes. August 1975. Volume 26, Issue 5. https://www.americanheritage.com/three-forgotten-heroes. Accessed December 2025.*

8. *G.*

9. *Col. Israel Angell wrote in his diary entry for this date: "Clowdy, but Soon Cleard away hot and Remaind Exceeding hot for the Season of the year till the afternoon when it began to thunder and was a Considerable of thunder and lightening, and rain" (Field, Angell Diary, 122). https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-28-02-0182-0003. Accessed December 2025.*

10. *G.*

11. *Angell.*

12. *G.*

13. *Borkow, Richard. Westchester County, New York and the Revolutionary War: Benedict Arnold's Treason is Exposed (1780). Westchester Magazine. June 14 2013. https://westchestermagazine.com/uncategorized/westchester-county-new-york-and-the-revolutionary-war-benedict-arnolds-treason-is-exposed-1780/. Accessed December 2025.*

14. *G.*

15. *Brown.*

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Angell.*

18. *Brown.*

19. Tallmadge, Benjamin. Letter to Jared Sparks. 17 February 1834. (Magazine of American History 3 (1879):752–56; https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-28-02-0182-0003. Accessed December 2025.

20. Brown.

21. Ibid.

22. Tallmadge, Benjamin. Letter to Jared Sparks. 16 November 1833. (Magazine of American History 3 (1879):748–50; see also Documents I, VIII, and XIII). https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-28-02-0182-0003. Accessed December 2025.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. *Angell.*

26. *Tallmadge, 1833.*

27. *Tallmadge, 1834.*

28. *Brown.*

29. *(Tallmadge, Memoir, 36–37).*
https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-28-02-0182-0003. Accessed December 2025.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Andre', John. Letter to George Washington. 24 September 1780.*
https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-28-02-0182-0003. Accessed December 2025.

32. *Tallmadge, 1834.*

33. *G.*

34. *Joshua Hett Smith House.*
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua_Hett_Smith_House. Accessed December 2025. - Randall, Willard Sterne (1990). Benedict Arnold: Patriot and Traitor. William Morrow and Co. Inc. ISBN 1-55710-034-9.p. 505-508.

35. *Major John Andre'. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Andr%C3%A9*

36. *Joshua Hett Smith House.*

37. *Borkow.*

38. *Tallmadge, 1834.*

39. *Major John Andre'.*

40. *Tallmadge, 1834.*

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Brown.*

43. *Ibid.*

44. *General Orders, 26 September 1780.*
https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-28-02-0198

45. *Brown.*

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Ibid.*

Article shared from https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/isaac-van-wart-1762-1828-revolutionary

Copyright 2026 Anne Wendel

DEBORAH CARL

1763–1777

THE ORIGINAL GRANTEES OF CAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Christopher, John, Uriel, and Eliphalet Holmes Stories250

Deborah blogs from https://YourFamilyQuest.com and her Substack publication of the same name. She also edits the Tips blog for https://MissionGenealogy.org.

SCAN ME

Samuel Holmes' lot (Lot 72 in the 1st Division) adjoined that of John Southmayd. Samuel was not one of the Original Proprietors of Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, being about seventeen years old when the Grant was obtained, but his father, Christopher Holmes, and his brothers John, Uriel, and Eliphalet were. How did they get involved in the Campton land deal? Abel Willey's mother (see The Original Grantees of Campton Part 3) was Christopher's sister.

Lot	Date	Pitched By	Pitched For	Original Right
1st Division Lot 59	24 Oct 1770	Samuel Holmes	John Holmes	Asa Spencer
1st Division Lot 60	24 Oct 1770	Samuel Holmes	Eliphalet Holmes	Eliphalet Holmes
1st Division Lot 38	4 Jun 1770	Samuel Holmes	Samuel Holmes	Christopher Holmes
1st Division Lot 58	4 Jun 1770	Joseph Spencer	John Holmes	John Holmes
1st Division Lot 72	Not recorded	Not recorded	Uriel Holmes	Uriel Holmes
2nd Division Lot 7, fourth tier	24 Oct 1770	Samuel Holmes	Uriel Holmes	Uriel Holmes
2nd Division Lot 8, fourth tier	24 Oct 1770	Samuel Holmes	Eliphalet Holmes	Eliphalet Holmes
2nd Division Lot 7, fifth tier	4 Jun 1770	Samuel Holmes	Christopher Holmes	Christopher Holmes
2nd Division Lot 3, second tier	4 Jun 1770	Joseph Spencer	John Holmes	John Holmes

Around 1770, Samuel arrived in Campton and was probably tasked with the care of his brothers' and father's interests.1

The Holmes Brothers and the Revolution

John Holmes, the eldest of Christopher's children, had five living children when the hostilities between the colonies and England broke out. Perhaps John feared for their safety, which may be why the family showed up in Campton in 1775. He was almost immediately elected as a selectman, but the fight for independence came at great personal cost.2

John's eldest child, John Jr., about fourteen years old, enlisted as a private in Captain Benjamin Stone's Company, in Colonel Scammel's Regiment on 10 March 1777. He fought at the Battle of Saratoga along with fellow townsman Asa Spencer. (See The Original Grantees of Campton Part Four.) On October 20th, the regiment was assigned to the Main Continental Army and joined George Washington at Valley Forge. John Jr. didn't make it to the camp. He died on 1 December 1777. It appears his parents honored his memory by calling their son, who was born in November 1777, John.3

CAMPTON.

A List of the Numbers in Campton according to the Requisition of the Provincial Congress convened at Exeter in New Hampshire, August 1775.

Above 50	5
From 16 to 50	44
Under 16	57
In the army	1
Females	83
Slaves	—
Total	190

Campton, Octr 25, 1775.

A true account (Errors excepted) pr JOHN HOLMES, NATH'L TUPPER ? } Select men

Documents and Records Relating to the Province of New Hampshire from 1764 to 1776, edited by Nathaniel Bouton (Nashua, New Hampshire: Orren C. Moore, State Printer, 1873), vol. VII, 729, Census of New Hampshire, Campton, 1775; FamilySearch.

Uriel Holmes was married and had a nine-year-old son when he joined the 26th Regiment and attained the rank of Major before he was discharged.4

Eliphalet Holmes, age twenty-nine, was also married but childless when he first enlisted to fight in the War for Independence. On his first tour of duty, he served as a Lieutenant in the Lexington Alarm Company under Captain John Willey, part of Colonel Joseph Spencer's East Haddam Regiment. He reenlisted in 1776, where he attained the rank of captain under Colonel Samuel Selden in Wadsworth's Brigade, and again in 1777 under Colonel Jedediah Huntington in Major General Joseph Spencer's Brigade. Eliphalet resigned his commission on 22 August 1780 due to ill health.5

On 17 November 1774, Christopher Holmes was appointed to a local committee charged with examining and hearing all complaints against any person or persons that are inimical "to the English Constitution and desire to introduce a more arbitrary and tyrannical form of government different from what hath been generally enjoyed since the revolution brought about under God by King William and Queen Mary A.D. 1688 until the present reign..."6

The committee was formed in response to Article 11 of the Articles of Association, written by the First Continental Congress, which urged communities to monitor the behavior of suspected loyalists and to publicize the names of those opposing the Continental cause so that "all such foes to the rights of British America may be publicly known, and universally condemned as enemies of American liberty." Many committee members later served as officers in the war, but Christopher, then sixty-one, did not.7

After the Revolution, Christopher, Uriel, and Eliphalet remained in Hadlyme, East Haddam, Connecticut, and they or their heirs sold the Campton properties.

Later Years and Legacy

In Campton, John bought and sold property, and he lent and borrowed money, but he never achieved prosperity. John died there on 27 March 1814.8

But Samuel Holmes became a wealthy man. He died on 1 January 1823 in Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, without issue and without a will. Widows were granted a dower instead of an inheritance, so Samuel's father stood to inherit his estate. Since Christopher was deceased, the estate would be divided equally between his mother (deceased) and his eight siblings who had reached adulthood (or their heirs).9

Siblings	Nieces and Nephews
Eliphalet Holmes of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut	
Ebenezer Holmes of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut	
Uriel Holmes (d. 1809)	Uriel Holmes of Litchfield, Litchfield, Connecticut
John Holmes (d. 1814)	Joel Holmes of Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire
	Mary (Holmes) Stearns of Hansteed, Lower Canada
	Sarah (Holmes) Stearns, wife of Samuel Sterns, of Hansteed, Lower Canada
	Chauncey Holmes of Isle Holt, Hancock, Maine
	John Holmes, of St. Stevens, British Province of New Brunswick
	Samuel Holmes, of Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire
Eleanor (Holmes) Marsh (d. 1792)	Edmund Marsh, of Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire
	Woodward Marsh, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut
	Holmes Marsh, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut
	Newton Marsh, of some place north part of the State of New York
	Christopher Marsh, of Franklin, Herkimer, New York
	Sarah (Marsh) Brooks, wife of Samuel Brooks, of Lyme, New London, Connecticut
Sarah (Holmes) Rawson (d. 1821)	Edward G. Rawson, of Braodalbin, Montgomery, New York
	Charles W. Rawson, of some town in the State of Georgia
	Sarah (Rawson) Usher, wife of Oliver Usher, of town unknown in the State of Georgia
	Catherine (Rawson) Palmer, wife of George Palmer, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut
	Tanner Rawson, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut
	Dorothy N. Rawson, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut
Mehitable (Holmes) Mather (d. 1810)	Sarah (Mather) Worthington, wife of Justin Worthington, of a town in the State of New York
	Augustus Mather, of some unknown town in said State of New York
	James Mather, of Lancaster, Cheshire, New Hamsphire
	Mary (Mather) Dutton, wife of Amasa Dutton, of a town unknown in said New York
Christopher Holmes (d. 1812)	Samuel Holmes, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut
	Christopher Holmes, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut
	Tanner John Holmes, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut
	Joseph Holmes, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut
	Sarah Holmes, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut
	Mary Holmes, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut
	Eliza Holmes, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut
	Mehitable Holmes, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut
	Esther (Holmes) Atwood, wife of Oliver Atwood, of East Haddam, Middlesex, Connecticut

All of John's children left Campton except Samuel.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Campton Town Records Vol. 1, 1767-1826, 38–39, Samuel Holmes pitched Lot 38 in the first division on the East side of the Pemegiwasett River for himself on the original right of his father, Christopher Holmes & 186–187, Lot 7 fifth tier in the second division for Christopher Holmes on 4 June 1770 & 48, Lots 59 in the first division for John Holmes on the original right of Asa Spencer and 60 in the first division for Eliphalet Holmes, 168–187, Lot 7 in the second division fourth tier for Uriel Holmes, 187, Lot 8 in the second division fourth tier for Eliphalet Holmes on 24 October 1770; FamilySearch.*

2. *The Campton town record book does not record any meetings of the Proprietors from 6 May 1774 to 8 February 1777. John Holmes appears to have arrived around 1775. See Proceedings at the Centennial Celebration of the Town of Campton, New Hampshire 12 September 1867 (Concord, New Hampshire: A. G. Jones, Printer, 1868), 115; FamilySearch. Before 25 October 1775, John Holmes was elected as a Selectman. See Documents and Records Relating to the Province of New Hampshire from 1764 to 1776, edited by Nathaniel Bouton (Nashua, New Hampshire: Orren C. Moore, State Printer, 1873), vol. VII, 729, Census of New Hampshire, Campton, 1775; FamilySearch.*

3. *New Hampshire Muster Rolls 1778–1787, Return of the Non Comissioned Officers and Privates in Captain Benjamin Stone's Company, 3rd New Hampshire Regiment, John Holmes; FamilySearch. Also, Documents Relating to Towns in New Hamsphire, A to F Inclusive, edited by Isaac W. Hammond (Concord, New Hampshire: Parsons B. Cogswell, State Printer, 1882), vol. XI, 250, Campton, Campton Soldiers' Orders, 1784, Petition of John Holmes for wages owed for service in the Continental Army due to his son John Holmes, deceased; FamilySearch. And Campton, Grafton, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1813–1834, unpaginated, record of children born to John Holmes and his wife Mary in Campton, entry for John, 23 November 1777; FamilySearch.*

4. *Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the I. War of the Revolution, II. War of 1812, III. Mexican War (Hartford, Connecticut: The Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company, 1889), 109, Colonel Ward's Regiment, 1775, Uriel Holmes, Second Lieutenant & 441, General Organizations, 1775–1783, Twenty-Sixth Regiment, Uriel Holmes, Major; FamilySearch.*

5. *Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the I. War of the Revolution, II. War of 1812, III. Mexican War (Hartford, Connecticut: The Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company, 1889), 146, Captains, Eliphalet Holmes, commissioned 1 January 1777; FamilySearch.*

6. *History of Middlesex County, Connecticut, with Biographical Sketches of Its Prominent Men (New York, New York; J. B. Beers & Co., 1884), 286, second col., Town Meeting held 17 November 1774; Internet Archive.*

7. *Journals of the Continental Congress 1774–1789, edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), vol. 1, 1774, 79, number 11; Library of Congress.*

8. *Grafton County, New Hampshire, Grantors Index, 1773–1850, H–K, 276–279, John Holmes; FamilySearch. Also, Grafton County, New Hampshire, Grantees Index, 1773–1805, H–M, 243–245, John Holmes; FamilySearch. No probate records were found for his estate, and the deeds where he sold land to his sons at market value led to the conclusion that he had few assets when he died. And, Find A Grave, database with images, memorial 75100087, John Holmes (1736–1814), memorial created by Bob, with gravestone image by Bob; Campton Hollow, Grafton, New Hampshire.*

9. *Robert W. Baird, Inheritance Laws in the Colonies, Bob's Genealogy Filing Cabinet: Southern and Colonial Genealogies. Also, Proceedings at the Centennial Celebration of the Town of Campton, New Hampshire 12 September 1867 (©1868), 21; FamilySearch. And, Grafton County, New Hampshire, Probate Records, vol. 8, 523–546, petitions regarding the estate of Samuel Holmes, the first dated 21 April 1824; FamilySearch.*

Article shared from
https://yourfamilyquest.substack.com/p/the-original-grantees-of-campton-c6a

Copyright 2026 Deborah Carl

HEATHER ROJO

1764–1836

MAJOR ANDREW MUNROE OF LEXINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

My Revolutionary War Patriots

Heather blogs at Nutfield Genalogy https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com since 2009 and more recently on Substack at nutfieldgenealogy.

SCAN ME

At the Munroe Tavern in Lexington, Massachusetts with my granddaughter

This is Patriot #2 I have written about for this series on my Revolutionary War ancestors. Major Andrew Munroe was born 31 March 1764 in Lexington, Massachusetts, the son of Andrew Munroe (1718 - 1766) and Mary Mixer (1727 - 1783). His mother was married three times, first to Daniel Simonds, second to Andrew Munroe and third to Caleb Simonds. Caleb had been married three times, too, and with his second wife, Susanna Converse had a daughter named Ruth Simonds. Ruth was Andrew Munroe's step sister, and they married 22 March 1785 in Burlington, Massachusetts.

Andrew Munroe was the great grandson of William Munroe (about 1625 - 1718), a Scots Prisoner of War who was captured at the Battle of Worcester in 1650 and sent in chains to be sold into servitude on the docks of what is now Charlestown, Massachusetts. He lived

in Cambridge, Massachusetts briefly and then removed to Cambridge Farms, now known as Lexington, Massachusetts in a part of town near the Woburn line that became known as "Scotland". He had fourteen children by three wives, and left many descendants in Lexington and Middlesex County who eventually fought in the Revolutionary War.

When Andrew was only eleven years old the Battle on Lexington Green took place. Many members of his Munroe family were at this battle, including his uncle William Munroe who was captain of the Lexington Militia. Several family members were killed including his two uncles, Robert Munroe (1712 - 1775) and Jonas Parker (1722 - 1775), who was married to his father's sister, Lucy Munroe. I'm sure that this event shaped Andrew's life in many ways, since he enlisted in the war very young. At age 16, on 15 July 1780, he enlisted in the Continental Army for six months under the command of Capt. James Cooper in the 16th division. He served under Brigadier General Patterson at Camp Tottoway on 25 October 1780 for another six months. Later Andew enlisted as a private in the Danvers Militia Company, where he served from 1796 to 1817. He applied from Danvers for a pension on 14 August 1832.

Andrew and Ruth were married in Burlington, and had two chidlren born in Woburn. His next two children, twins Andrew and Ishmael, were born in New Grafton, New Hampshire on 1 April 1789. Andrew had been given a land grant in New Grafton for his military service. It doesn't appear that he stayed very long in New Grafton, but returned to Danvers, Massachusetts where seven more children were born.

I couldn't find his being promoted to Major in his military records, but his gravestone at the King's Burial Ground in Peabody (formerly part of the town of Danvers) read:

> *"In the memory of Major Andrew Munroe Formerly of Lexington Soldier of the Revolution who died Aug. 7, 1836 aged 73 Erected by his daughter Mrs. Mary T. Taylor."*

I descend from the youngest child of the eleven children, Luther Simonds Munroe (1805 - 1851) who married Olive Flint, daughter of John Fint and Phebe Flint (second cousins), on 3 September 1826 in Reading, Massachusetts.

FOR THE TRULY CURIOUS

More information on Major Andrew Munroe for the truly curious:

- ***Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolution***
- ***History and Genealogy of the Lexington, Massachusetts Munroes*** *by Richard S. Munroe, 1966*
- ***Report of the Committee Appointed to Revise the Soldier's Record by Danvers****, Massachusetts, 1895 (see page 142)*

Other blog posts about Andrew Munroe and the Munroe family:

- *2012 "Surname Saturday - Munroe of Lexington, Massachusetts" https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2012/06/surname-saturday-munroe-of-lexington.html*
- *2012 "5 November 1789, George Washington Dined Here!" https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2012/11/5-november-1789-george-washington-dined.html*
- *2013 "He married his step sister?" https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2013/02/he-married-his-step-sister.html*
- *2015 "The woeful life of a colonial woman" (about Mary Mixer Munroe) https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2015/03/the-woeful-life-of-colonial-woman.html*
- *#1 in this series Colonel Joshua Burnham of Milford, New Hampshire: https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2026/02/my-revolutionary-war-patriots-colonel.html*

Article shared from https://nutfieldgenealogy.blogspot.com/2026/03/my-revolutionary-war-patriots-major.html

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Heather Rojo

Abel Buell (1742-1822), A New and Correct Map of the United States of North America Layd Down from the Latest Observations and Best Authorities Agreeable to the Peace of 1783.

***Credit**: The Library of Congress. Learn more at the special exhibition, "Mapping a New Nation" https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/mapping-a-new-nation/special-presentation/closerlook.html*

DAI DAVIES

1765–1833

CELLAN'S LENDING LIBRARY

Education in a Small Welsh Place

Dai blogs from https://genealcymru.com with a newsletter by the same name on Substack and has an active following on https://www.youtube.com/GenealCymru and https://genealcymru.bsky.social

SCAN ME

It was a day like any other in the Welsh parish of Cellan, September 25th, 1765, when a small iron chest arrived at the doors of All Saints' Anglican Church. A special delivery, the first of its kind, for the Rev. Williams. Heavy, despite its size, the chest was lugged onto a sturdy wooden pew near the chancel and opened to reveal 36 freshly-bound books. And a note:

> *"Kellan, Cardiganshire. The undermentioned books are a donation of the worthy Associates of the late Dr. Bray, established here as a parochial library for the use and benefit of the officiating minister of this parish, from time to time, for ever."[1]*

This rural, unassuming parish now had its first lending library.

Other such libraries were popping up in the area around this time too. The neighbouring town of Lampeter and other rural parishes like Llandyssul and Llanwnen also received their own. In fact, these chests of books weren't just sent to Wales or even across the British Isles, they were sent all around the world to far-off places like the West Indies, Bengal, Newfoundland, and South Africa. The American colonies of Maryland, Virginia, New York, and Pennsylvania were home to the earliest and largest of these collections.[2]

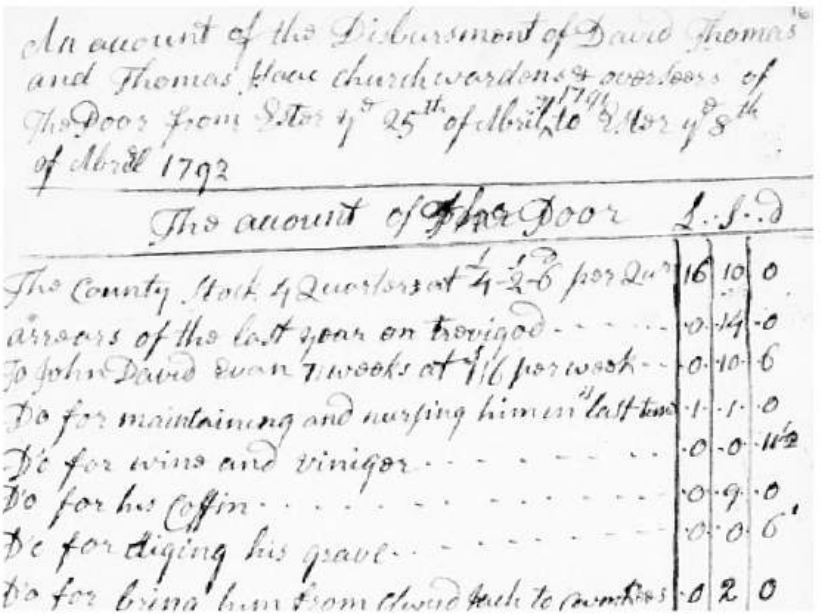
All Saint's Church, Cellan, by Roger D. Kidd, 2010, Geograph, cc-by-sa2.0

But in Cellan, perhaps, in the eyes of Rev. Williams, his parish was in need of a good collection of books, especially those extolling, what he might call, the true religion of the Church of England. And perhaps one to match the English, Latin, and Greek collection of the Rev. Timothy Davies of the nearby Caeronen Presbyterian Chapel. The nonconformists, after all, had a stronghold in Rev. Williams' parish and those it neighboured, many of the yeoman and gentlemen farmers having joined the movement across the preceding century. My ancestors were among these early nonconformists of what became known as the Cilgwyn Circuit. Among my known living ancestors in the neighbourhood in 1765 were my 8x great grandparents, Timothy Jacob and Elinor Thomas of Goitre Isaf farm, Llangybi, and David Davies and his "loving wife" of Tynylofft, Bettws Bledrws, as well as my 7x great grandparents, David John Morgan and Sarah of Pentre, Llanfair Clydogau, and David Thomas and Mary Davies of Olwen, Lampeter. My only known direct ancestor to have lived in Cellan was the above Elinor's father, Thomas Rydderch, who died there a few years earlier in 1759. However, I have a strong suspicion, given the many connections between my ancestors and the old farming families of Cellan, that I'll one day find that my own roots lead there.

Cilgwyn Chapel, Llangybi, 2023, courtesy of Camilla von Massenbach.

The Cilgwyn Circuit, which included chapels in a number of parishes, including Cellan, fostered an educational-mindedness and Cilgwyn Chapel was upheld by some early scholars as "an educational center with the best in Wales."[3] So many from this branch of my family tree received an uncommon degree of education in the 18th Century. For example, one of my three known 9x great grandparents, Lettice

Thomas (the above David Davies of Tynylofft's mother), a woman born some time before 1685, was able to sign her name all the way back in 1711, in what appears to be a practised, if a bit shaky, hand.[4] And my David Thomas of Olwen, later in the 18th Century, was literate to the point of being able to do the accounting for his term as the Overseer of the Poor.[5] A perusal of student lists of institutions like the Carmarthen Presbyterian Academy will show many who found their roots in the Cilgwyn circuit and some of whom, undoubtedly, would have flipped through the books from the lending library at Cellan or others in the area.



An account of the Disbursment of David Thomas and Thomas Isaac churchwardens & overseers of The Poor from Ester ye 25th of Abril 1791 to Ester ye 8th of Abril 1792

The account of The Poor	L.	S.	d
The County Stock 4 Quarters at 1/4-1/2-6 per Qu	16	10	0
arrears of the last year on trevigod	0	14	0
To John David Evan 7 weeks at 1/16 per week	0	10	6
Do for maintaining and nursing him in last time	1	1	0
Do for wine and viniger	0	0	11½
Do for his Coffin	0	9	0
Do for diging his grave	0	0	6
Do for bring him from Clwyd Jack to [illegible]	0	2	0

This account is written in the hand of my 7x great grandfather, David Thomas of Olwen, Lampeter, from the National Library of Wales, Public Domain

By 1904, when the antiquarian, George Eyre Evans, wrote about Cellan's lending library, only a few of the 36 volumes remained.[6] Among them, you could find "The Christian's Way to Heaven," first published in 1700, and "The Original and Right of Tithes" from 1691. There was also "Instructions to the *ndians," written in 1692. A later 18th Century writer described this book as a "plain and useful system of Christian ethics, adapted to the capacities of the most illiterate."[7] These were books sent with the purpose of teaching Christian values to the people.

Deep in the heart of Welsh-speaking Wales though, you wouldn't immediately think that these English-language books would be of much use. But, interestingly, the middling sort of families of this area —those who could call themselves gentlemen, yeomen, or just farmers—had a long tradition of sending their children off to get an English education. My own ancestor, David Davis, the eldest son of

the Timothy and Elinor of Goitre Isaf mentioned above, in 1765 was soon to leave for far-off Leominster in England to study English under his uncle, the Rev. Joshua Thomas.[8] This back and forth from rural Cardiganshire to Herefordshire is a route that many of my ancestors took, generation after generation, until the 1870s.[9] It was also a route to proficiency in the English language that would have benefitted from a collection of English-language books.

Of course, travelling to England for school wasn't an opportunity that was available to all—many in the area went without even a basic elementary education. But by this time, many people would have learned to read Welsh thanks to the circulating Welsh Charity Schools. Founded by the Rev. Griffith Jones and Madam Bridget Bevan, the Welsh Charity Schools had a similar goal to Bray's Libraries: to teach people the fundamentals of Christianity. For Rev. Jones and Madam Bevan, the way to achieve this goal was to teach people to read the Welsh Bible for themselves. So the program sent teachers to wherever they were invited, to hold classes for three to four months, for anyone who chose to show up. By the end of Rev. Jones' life in 1761, they had already taught over 158,000[10] people to read and even more were reached under Madam Bevan's leadership over the next 18 years. The parish of Cellan received one of their schools in 1760,[11] five years before the arrival of their library, and 48 parishioners attended day classes.[12] By the 1770s, the schools arrived in the two neighbouring parishes: Lampeter in 1770, 1772, and 1775, and Llanfair Clydogau in 1773 and 1774, in which year they held three day schools and a night school, reaching 249 students.[13] Like Cellan, Llanfair Clydogau was a small, rural parish that, by 1833, only had a population of 385![14]

Madam Bevan, from the National Library of Wales, Public Domain

The thing that I take away from this small history of education in an even smaller place is how the stories we uncover as family historians often fly in the face of assumptions we make about the past. It's long been held that people in the past generally didn't value education—especially the rural poor. But from the establishment of Dr. Bray's libraries all over the world, to the early school in my ancestors' community, to the lengths some of those ancestors went to to send their children across the country to finish their schooling, and to the thousands upon thousands of people all across Wales who attended the Welsh Charity Schools, it becomes clear just how hungry people were for an education. It took over a century after the Associates of Dr. Bray delivered their books to Cellan for universal access to education to arrive in Wales. Supporting universal access to education is something small that we can all do to honour our ancestors who worked so hard to make it happen and I think it's our duty in the present to see that universal education becomes available to everyone, everywhere.

FOOTNOTES

1. *1903. Philip Sidney (George Eyre Evans). "An Eighteenth Century Parochial Library." Welsh Gazette and West Wales Advertiser. Oct. 8, 1903, p. 7. Digital Images. National Library of Wales.*

2. *1769. Associates of Dr. Bray. An Account of the Designs of the Associates of the late Dr. Bray. London.*

3. *1937. T. Eirug Davies. "Y Cofiadur Philip Pugh a'i Lafur yn y Cilgwyn." Y Cofiadur. Issue 14:16-36, p. 18.*

4. *1711. David Thomas. Administration dated Nov. 15, 1711. Welsh Wills 1556-1858. Betws Bledrws. Diocese of St. David's, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. http://hdl.handle.net/10107/313065.*

5. *1792. Lampeter Vestry Book, 1777-1803. Lampeter Parochial Records 1, p. 138-140/280. Digital Images. National Library of Wales. http://hdl.handle.net/10107/4836598.*

6. *1903. Philip Sidney (George Eyre Evans). "An Eighteenth Century Parochial Library." Welsh Gazette and West Wales Advertiser. Oct. 8, 1903, p. 7. Digital Images. National Library of Wales.*

7. *1781. Anonymous. "Review of The Works of the Right Reverend Father in God, Thomas Wilson, D. D Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man, by C. Cruttwell." In The Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature Vol. 51: p. 39*

AI 100% human-made

8. *1828. Thomas Griffiths. "Cofiant am y Parch. David Davies, gynt o Gastell-Hywel, Ceredigion." Carmarthen: J. Evans in the offices of Seren Gomer.*

9. *1945. Dan Jenkins. "Old Herefordshire Schools: Where Cardiganshire Children Learned English." Welsh Gazette. Dec. 2, 1945, p. 6. Digital Images. FindMyPast.*

10. *1835. A Summary of the Life and Character of the Rev. Griffith Jones. Carmarthen: W. Evans & Co.*

11. *1760. Griffith Jones. Welch Piety. Bartholomew Close: J. & W. Oliver. http://hdl.handle.net/10107/5430375.*

12. *I checked every yearly report for the years between 1740–1777 (except for nine missing editions) for mentions of the parish of Cellan and its neighbourhood.*

13. *1774. Anonymous. Welch Piety. Bartholomew Close: J. & W. Oliver. http://hdl.handle.net/10107/5429796.*

14. *1834. Samuel Lewis. A Topographical Dictionary of Wales, Vol. 2. London: S. Lewis & Co.*

Article shared from https://genealcymru.com/2026/02/01/stories250-cellan-ceredigion-wales-history/

Copyright 2026 Dai Davies

Mary blogs at the Dr. Mary Marshall Collection on Substack at https://drmarymarshall.substack.com and has her archives at Emory University, https://archives.libraries.emory.edu/repositories/7/resources/3057

SCAN ME

SCAN ME

RECORDED TALK

SCAN ME

SCAN ME

1774–1787

SPRINGFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH

My spirit, my soul will always be a member of Springfield Baptist Church. It provided the religious, educational, and leadership skills that shaped me who I am today.

All Saint's Church, Cellan, by Roger D. Kidd, 2010, Geograph, cc-by-sa2.0

Historic Springfield Baptist Church (SBC), Augusta, GA, founded in 1787, is the church my ancestors selected as the family church beginning in the mid 1870s. My great grandmother, great grandaunts, and grandmother, including my siblings and I were active members there.

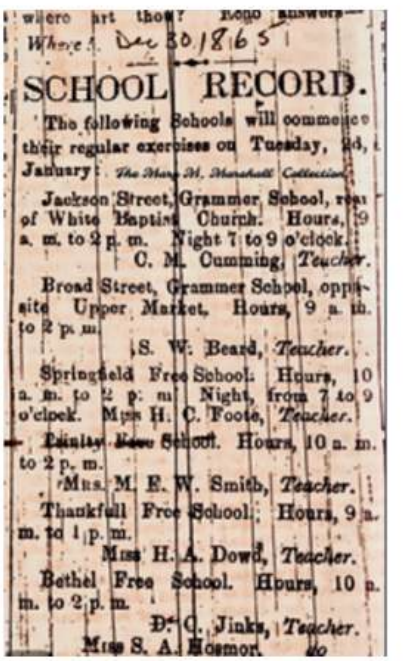
Springfield's origin is from *Silver Bluff Baptist Church, Jackson, SC, founded between 1774-1778 by Jesse Peters Galphin* during America's pre-revolutionary war period.

> Peters, who took the name Galphin, was likely a free black in 1788 when he joined white Abraham Marshall in ordaining Andrew Bryan in Savannah. Partly on the basis of that event, today's *Springfield Church* uses the year 1787 as the date of its location in the village of Springfield, which was annexed by the city of Augusta in 1798. After studying the origins of the various churches, historian Walter Brooks concludes, "*the oldest Negro Baptist church in this country today is that at Augusta, Georgia, having existed at Silver Bluff, South Carolina, from the period 1774-1775 to the year 1793, before becoming a Georgia institution.*" (italics mine)1

Springfield leaders and congregants displayed the same level of confidence and determination to remain independent during the period of the Civil War. By 1865, the church was an integral part of Springfield Village and put their lives on the line to protect it.

> *Springfield was the only church in Augusta that was not used as a hospital during the Civil War. At the corner of Broad and Jackson Streets, five Deacons formed a human barricade. They told the soldiers of what peril would befall them if they attempted to make Springfield a hospital. The soldiers heeded their warning and left the church alone.2*

Leaders and members were equally serious about education. In 1865, SBC also provided an opportunity for anyone in the African American community interested in literacy. They started Springfield Free School.



SCHOOL RECORD.

The following Schools will commence their regular exercises on Tuesday, 3d, January.

Jackson Street, Grammer School, rear of White Baptist Church. Hours, 9 a. m. to 2 p. m. Night 7 to 9 o'clock.
C. M. Cumming, *Teacher.*

Broad Street, Grammer School, opposite Upper Market. Hours, 9 a. m. to 2 p. m.
S. W. Beard, *Teacher.*

Springfield Free School. Hours, 10 a. m. to 2 p. m. Night, from 7 to 9 o'clock. Miss H. C. Foote, *Teacher.*

Bethel Free School. Hours, 10 a. m. to 2 p. m.
Mrs. M. E. W. Smith, *Teacher.*

Thankfull Free School. Hours, 9 a. m. to 1 p. m.
Miss H. A. Dowd, *Teacher.*

Bethel Free School. Hours, 10 a. m. to 2 p. m.
D. C. Jinks, *Teacher.*
Miss S. A. Hosmer, do

Clipping found in Family Bible|Dr. Mary M. Marshall Collection

> *Springfield also founded The Augusta Baptist Institute in 1867. It moved to another church in Augusta then to Atlanta, GA, becoming Morehouse College. John Hope (1868-1936) served as its First Black President taking office in 1906.3*

SBC, served by African American pastors during the antebellum years, had the largest membership—1187 members— of any church in the Georgia Baptist Association in 1881.

In an earlier newsletter about SBC, "Marriage and Springfield Baptist Church, Augusta, GA" I revealed that Springfield Baptist Church adopted many of the white patriarchal rules that shaped governance, membership, behavior, and status as illustrated in the document below. See the following years: 1882, 1889, 1901.4

Springfield Historic Marker dedicated November 12, 1999, photo from GeorgiaHistory.com, "Birthplace of Morehouse College" blog: post https://www.georgiahistory.com/marker-monday-springfield-baptist-church-birthplace-of-morehouse-college/

1787 1987

Springfield Baptist Church, Inc.

114-12th St. - 30901 • P.O. Box 2842 - 30904

Rev. Louise Martin, Assistant Pastor
Deacon Julian Gregg, Chairman, Board of Deacons
Mr. Milledge Williams, Jr., Chairman, Board of Trustees

Augusta, Georgia
(404) 724-1056
E. T. MARTIN, PASTOR
(404) 793-5534

Mr. M. Theodosia Edwards, Financial Secretary
Mrs. Harriet Green, Church Clerk
Mr. Isaac Johnson, Treasurer

Historical Notes & Bits about Springfield Baptist Church.

The following "Notes & Bits" about our beloved Springfield were researched and compiled by Ms. Mary H. Marshall of Augusta, Georgia and Bronx, New York. The information was taken from various church documents and the personal family collection of the late Mrs. Mary Burnett Williams, great grandmother of Ms. Marshall. Mrs. Williams was an early member of Springfield, having joined the church circa 1900. Mrs. Williams' collection was continued by her daughters Mrs. Hattie Williams Bell, Mrs. Marion McCann and Ms. Mary Frances Williams, all now deceased; and by Mrs. Jimmie L. Carr, currently living in New York City. It is with great pride and pleasure that the family of Mrs. Mary Burnett Williams shares these memories of Springfield Baptist Church life with you.

1787 Springfield Baptist Church founded on the spot where it still stands in 1987.

1859 Springfield established the first Negro Baptist Sunday School in Georgia and in the United States of America.

1865 Springfield was the only church in Augusta that was not used as a hospital during the Civil War. At the corner of Broad and Jackson Streets, five Deacons formed a human barricade. They told the soldiers of what peril would befall them if they attempted to make Springfield a hospital. The soldiers heeded their warning and left the church alone.

1881 Despite the snow, 110 persons were baptized in the river. Membership totaled 1107.

1882 Members could be excommunicated for joining the Catholic Church, going to the circus, going to a bar or drunkenness.

1882 Rev. C. T. Walker was invited to preach. A "feet washing" was held prior to the service.

1887 Brother Walls, from Africa, came to the Church to lecture on Africa and African life.

1888 The Church was declared free from all debt.

1889 The Church voted that members of the Church who exposed Church business and participated in backbiting should be reported and dealt with immediately.

1896 A Rally was held to raise funds for the new building.

1897 The contract was confirmed to build a new Church building.

1897 A contest was held to determine who would lay the 1st brick for the new Church. The person reporting the amount of $10.66 won the honor.

1898 The membership voted to give organization support of $1.00 to each of the following: Spelman College, Atlanta Baptist Seminary, Walker Institute and African Missions.

1898 The membership endorsed a letter from the White Christian Union Mission to assist in moving all of the houses of ill repute or inmates from around the neighborhood.

1901 The Church voted to repeal the law which called for withdrawing fellowship of those who attended the circus and operas. Such persons would hereafter be dealt with by reprimand and induced not to attend such events.

1902 Total Church membership was 1032.

1902 The membership voted to suspend Church rules to allow for presentation of the Passion Play and showing of movies.

1903 The Church voted to send a letter protesting the opening of a bar on either side of Marbury (now 12th) and Jones Street.

1944 A Church rally was organized to raise money to repair the old church building. The rally took the form of a National Mock Presidential election. Letters were sent to all members and each member was assigned to the Republican or Democratic party. The following members headed each ticket:

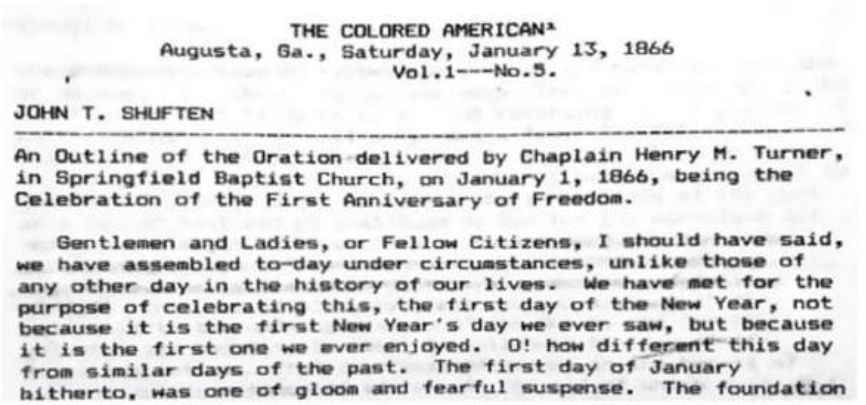
Democratic Party	Republican Party
Dea. C. Curry, Pres.	Trustee C.O. Migtall, Pres.
Mrs. F. Sanders, VP	Mrs. A.E. Ball, VP
Mr. W.J. Hang, Campgn. Mgr.	Mr. W.H. Searles, Campgn. Mgr.
Mr. T.W. Walker, Chr. Natl. Com.	Ms. A.B. Johnson, Chr. Natl. Com.

1982 Springfield Baptist Church was officially listed in the National Register of Historic Places on June 17, 1982.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

SBC History | Author | Dr. Mary Marshall Collection 1870-2006

During the Revolutionary and Civil War eras, Springfield and its congregation existed in the midst of major military assaults on Augusta, including General Sherman's attack on the city. Before and during the Civil War, Rev. Henry McNeal Turner, a Georgia pastor and one of the Black senators in the Georgia Legislature, spoke at Springfield on January 1, 1866. His sermon, Celebration of The First Anniversary," called out the treatment of Black women and urged Black Augustans to migrate back to Africa. The speech appeared in THE COLORED AMERICAN.5



THE COLORED AMERICAN
Augusta, Ga., Saturday, January 13, 1866
Vol.1---No.5.

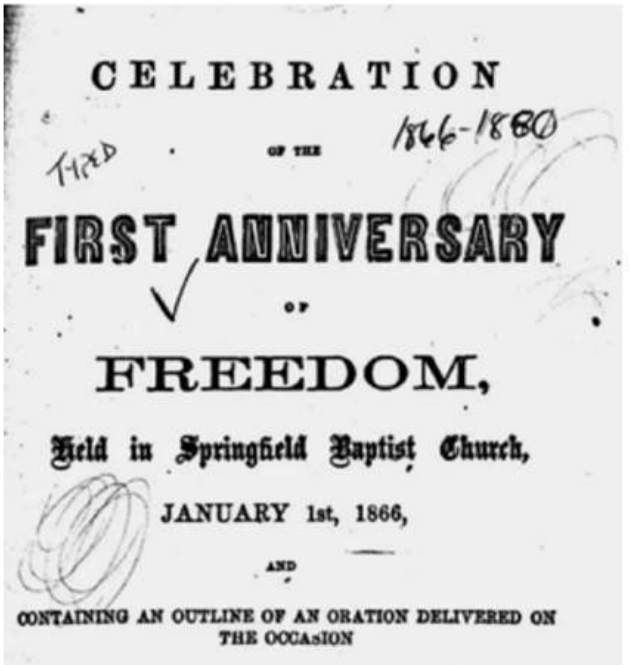
JOHN T. SHUFTEN

An Outline of the Oration delivered by Chaplain Henry M. Turner, in Springfield Baptist Church, on January 1, 1866, being the Celebration of the First Anniversary of Freedom.

Gentlemen and Ladies, or Fellow Citizens, I should have said, we have assembled to-day under circumstances, unlike those of any other day in the history of our lives. We have met for the purpose of celebrating this, the first day of the New Year, not because it is the first New Year's day we ever saw, but because it is the first one we ever enjoyed. O! how different this day from similar days of the past. The first day of January hitherto, was one of gloom and fearful suspense. The foundation

Henry McNeal Turner|The Colored American|The Mary M. Marshall Collection

The following announcement of Chaplain Turner's speech as well as the full speech can be found in The Henry McNeal Turner Project.6



CELEBRATION

OF THE

FIRST ANNIVERSARY

OF

FREEDOM,

Held in Springfield Baptist Church,

JANUARY 1st, 1866,

AND

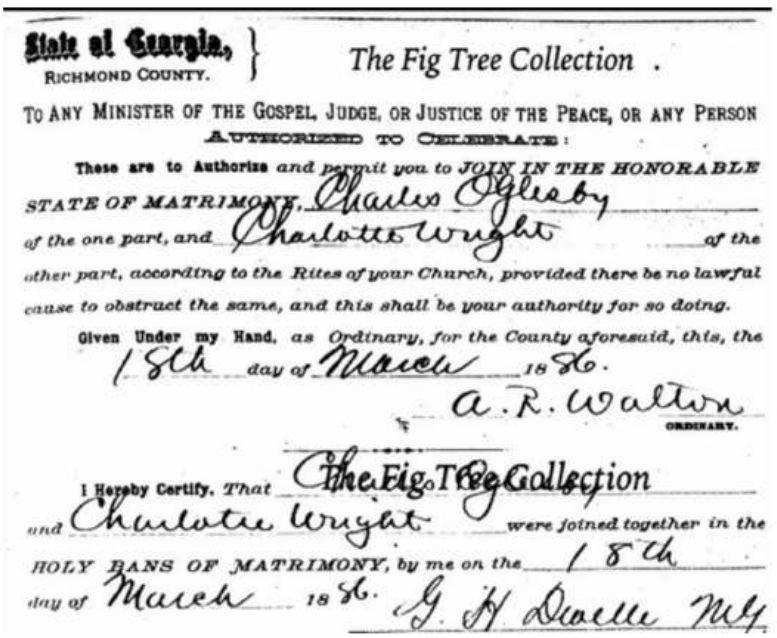
CONTAINING AN OUTLINE OF AN ORATION DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION

The Henry McNeal Turner Project

The War battles impacted all Augustans, but did not stop SBC from functioning. The church continued its independent role in Springfield Village during and after the Civil War.

Over time, people who lived in Springfield Village moved to other neighborhoods as that area became more commercialized. The church did not move nor did it stop growing.

My great grandaunt, Charlotte Wright, was married by Rev. G. H. Dwelle in 1886.



State of Georgia, } The Fig Tree Collection .
RICHMOND COUNTY.

TO ANY MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, JUDGE, OR JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, OR ANY PERSON AUTHORIZED TO CELEBRATE:

These are to Authorize and permit you to JOIN IN THE HONORABLE STATE OF MATRIMONY, Charles Oglesby of the one part, and Charlotte Wright of the other part, according to the Rites of your Church, provided there be no lawful cause to obstruct the same, and this shall be your authority for so doing.

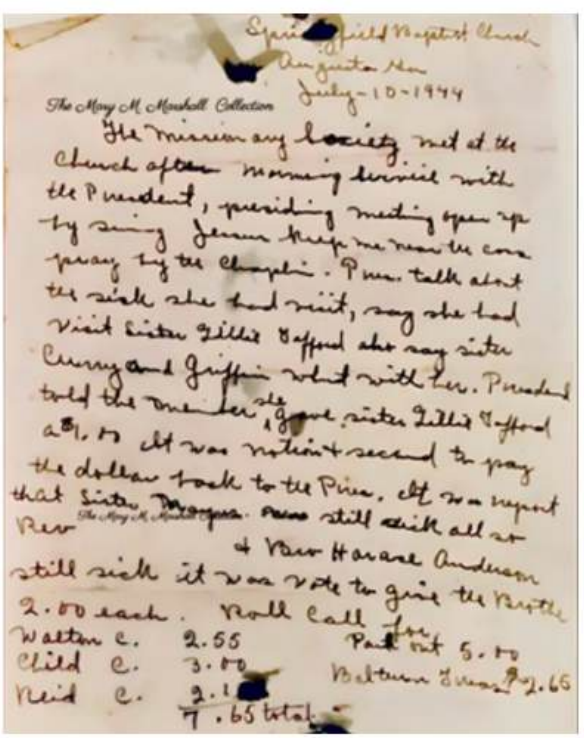
Given Under my Hand, as Ordinary, for the County aforesaid, this, the 18th day of March 1886.

A. R. Walton
ORDINARY.

I Hereby Certify, That The Fig Tree Collection and Charlotte Wright were joined together in the HOLY BANS OF MATRIMONY, by me on the 18th day of March 1886. G. H. Dwelle MG

Wedding Certificate|The Fig Tree Collection|The Mary M. Marshall Collection

My grandmother served in the Missionary Society as secretary in 1944.7



Springfield Baptist Church
Augusta Ga
July-10-1944

The Mary M. Marshall Collection

The missionary Society met at the Church after morning service with the President, presiding meeting open up by sing Jesus keep me near the cross pray by the Chaplin. Pres. talk about the sick she had visit, say she had visit Sister Lillie Tafford also say sister Curry and Griffin what with her. President told the member she gave sister Lillie Tafford a $1.00 It was notion & second to pay the dollar back to the Pres. It was report that Sister Marquis still sick all so Rev & Rev Horace Anderson still sick it was vote to give the Brothe 2.00 each. Roll Call for

Walton C. 2.55
Child C. 3.00
Reid C. 2.1
7.65 total

Part out 5.00
Balturn Treas $2.65

SBC Missionary Minutes|The Mary M. Marshall Collection

Springfield has the distinction of starting the first Sunday School in Georgia. My sister and I also participated in the Sunday School and Youth Choir.

M. Marshall: 1st on L; C. Marshall: 5th from R| The Mary M. Marshall Collection

> *In 1995 a coalition of city and community leaders began construction of Springfield Village Park [in commemoration of the community that once inhabited the area and lived] adjacent to the church. The park features abstract metal sculptures by nationally known African American artist Richard Hunt of Chicago. Plaques along an ascending ramp tell the history of American blacks as well as the history of Springfield Church.9*

Springfield Village Park|The Mary M. Marshall Collection

Members of Springfield Baptist Church love the church and its history as much as I do. Listen to Walter Wright, long-time member and others share the history and their feelings about the church.

Springfield Baptist Church holds title as oldest Black Baptist Church in America on YouTube, published by https://www.youtube.com/@WJBF6 on Feb 22, 2022.

Article shared from https://drmarymarshall.substack.com/p/springfield-baptist-church

SCAN ME

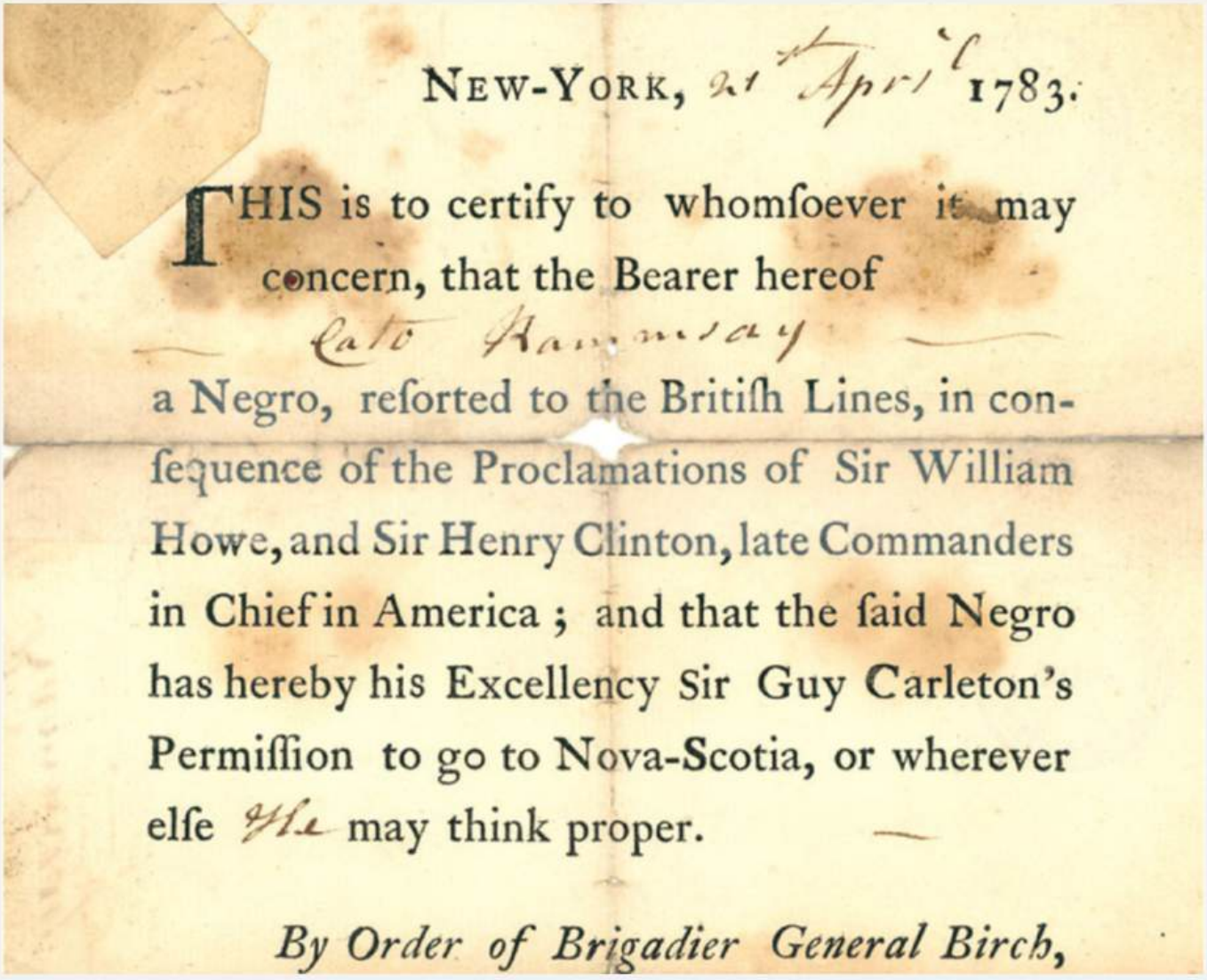
SOURCES

1. *https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/counties-cities-neighborhoods/augusta/*
2. *Marshall, Mary M. "Historical Notes & Bits about Springfield Baptist Church" fact sheet compiled for 1978 Springfield Church Anniversary*
3. *https://www.georgiaencyclopedia*
4. *https://open.substack.com/pub/drmarymarshall/p/marriage-and-springfield-baptist?r=cncki&utm_med*
5. *Address by Henry McNeal Turner. (1866, January 1). The Colored American*
6. *https://thehenrymcnealturnerproject.org/2019/03synopsis-on-january-1st-1866-henry-.hty?m+1*
7. *https://digital.library.emory.edu/catalog*
8. *Ibid*
9. *https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/springfield-baptist-church*

If you enjoyed this article, you may also be interested in Dr. Marshall's other post about her family's connection to the Springfield Baptist Church: https://drmarymarshall.substack.com/p/marriage-and-springfield-baptist

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Mary Marshall



NEW-YORK, 21st April 1783.

THIS is to certify to whomſoever it may concern, that the Bearer hereof

Cato Ramsay

a Negro, reſorted to the Britiſh Lines, in conſequence of the Proclamations of Sir William Howe, and Sir Henry Clinton, late Commanders in Chief in America; and that the ſaid Negro has hereby his Excellency Sir Guy Carleton's Permiſſion to go to Nova-Scotia, or wherever elſe He may think proper.

By Order of Brigadier General Birch,

Pass by Brigadier General Samuel Birch to Cato Ramsay. *Learn more: https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/finding-freedom/pages/london-birch-pass*

Credit: *Courtesy of Public Archives of Nova Scotia. File:Book of Negroes, Samuel Birch.png, Wikimedia Commons, public domain.*

DEBORAH CARL

1775–1905

LEFT BEHIND

He was at the opening salvo of the Revolutionary War, and died three days later, left behind in Lexington by his comrades in arms, after he was shot during the retreat from Concord. #Stories250

It was chilly as the soldier waited on the shore of the Charles River with his brothers-in-arms. It had taken two trips to ferry the seven hundred men across the river, and then they'd waited for almost two hours. Finally, the march to Concord began around 2 a.m. on 19 April 1775.

It was supposed to be an easy mission. The men would march through the night to Concord, frighten the malcontents away, and seize the cache of weapons. Earlier, Major Edward Mitchell had been sent to stop all traffic between Lexington and Concord, so the dissentients wouldn't know they were coming.

The plan failed. As the troops marched, church bells rang, and shots echoed in the night, alerting the countryside to their progress. An attempt to shoot one of their scouting parties led Major John Pitcarn to tell the men to load their weapons, but not to fire without orders. The soldier loaded his musket.

In Lexington, seventy armed men stood on the town green. The soldiers fell into formation to confront the challengers. As planned, their overwhelming numbers discouraged the local militia, and almost half of them dispersed. Pitcarn ordered the rebels to lay down their arms and directed his men to round up and disarm anyone trying to leave. Then the fateful shot rang out.

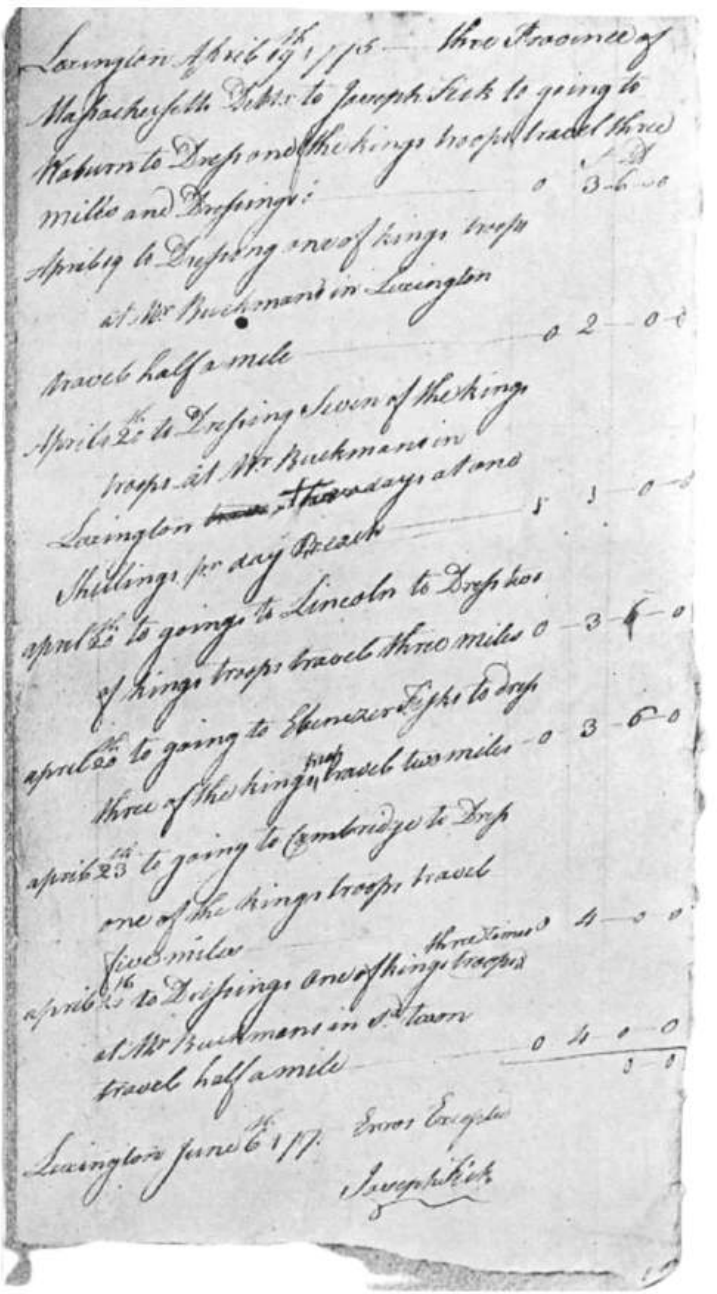
The Battle of Lexington from the drawing by Hammatt Billings copied from The History of Lexington, Middlesex, Massachusetts by Charles Hudson, Bi-Centenary Edition, illustration before the second title page; FamilySearch. Colorized using MyHeritage.

The British later claimed they didn't fire it, and the Americans claimed they didn't fire it. Whether purposeful or accidental, it triggered the war. Without orders, the front line of soldiers fired a volley at the provincials, followed by the second and third ranks. Eight of the rebels were killed. The army disengaged and continued its march on Concord.

The delay at Lexington allowed the colonists to assemble in force at Concord. After a disorganized battle, the British regulars retreated, harassed by the Americans. Soldiers were wounded and killed, and their ammunition was almost gone. The retreat became a rout. Once past Lexington Green, the officers were able to reestablish order, and further down the road, they were joined by reinforcements. By the time they arrived in Boston, seventy-three were dead, twenty-six were missing, and 174 were wounded.

Several who were wounded during the retreat through Lexington were left behind. They were taken to Buckman Tavern and treated by Joseph Fiske, Lexington's town doctor. One died three days later and was interred in the Old Burying Ground. His comrades may have known his name, but the British Army didn't record the details for common infantrymen. Which of the many names on the muster rolls belonged to him is no longer known.

He may have volunteered or was compelled to enlist to avoid imprisonment or the gallows. The army provided food, shelter, and a small income, but for the rank and file, enlistment was a lifetime commitment. As for his family in England, they probably never heard from him again—and never expected to. No effort would have been made to notify them of his death.



Doctor Fiske's bill from The History of Lexington, Middlesex, Massachusetts by Charles Hudson, Bi-Centenary Edition, illustration between pages 224 and 225; FamilySearch.

The grave was unmarked, but its location was reportedly passed down from Nathan Harrington, who lived in Lexington in 1775, to his son Abijah Harrington. Abijah later showed the spot, near the Eustis monument, to Eli M. Robbins, who in turn shared it with Dr. Francis H. Brown. In 1905, Brown petitioned for a grave marker, which was erected that year by the Lexington Historical Society.

While several of the other graves fly American flags to honor their service, the grave of the unknown British soldier is marked with the Union Jack.

Photo from Find A Grave used with permission of bigjohnack, See Sources.

SOURCES

- *Allen Frence, "The British Expedition to Concord, Massachusetts, in 1775," Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research, Vol. 15, No. 57 (Spring, 1936), 17–31; JSTOR.*
- *Charles Hudson, History of the Town of Lexington, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, From Its First Settlement to 1868, Bi-Centenary Edition Revised and Continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society, vol. 1 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913); FamilySearch.*
- *Thomas Mallinson, Assistant Curator, Lancashire Infantry Museum, Fulwood Barracks, Preston, Lancashire, England; email to Deborah Carl, 3 April 2023.*
- *Travis Shaw, "The British Army in the American Revolution," updated 21 November 2024; American Battlefield Trust.*
- *J. L. Bell, "The Soldier Who Died in Buckman Tavern," Boston 1775.*
- *"Grave of British Soldier in Ye Old Burying Ground," Freedom's Way.*
- *Find A Grave, database with images, memorial 7395553, Unknown British Soldier of the American Revolutionary War (unk-1775), memorial created by Eric Thomsen, with gravestone images by Eric Thomsen and bigjohnack.*

Article shared from https://yourfamilyquest.substack.com/p/left-behind

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Deborah Carl

ANNE WENDEL

1775–1931

Anne blogs at Grandma's Granny's Family Album https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com

SCAN ME

BLACK LOYALISTS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

My Ancestors' Neighbors across the Generations ~ Stories 250

Reenactor of Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment. Photo from https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/lord-dunmores-ethiopian-regiment/

The Black Loyalists suffer a double whammy in American history... they supported the losing side in our origin story, and they don't fit our founding myth that the Declaration of Independence declared all men are created equal and deserve life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Or that we're the good guys.

The Virginia Proclamation is not in the Virginia public school curriculum. Patrick Henry's speech advocating independence from England, given at St. John's Church in Richmond, is.1

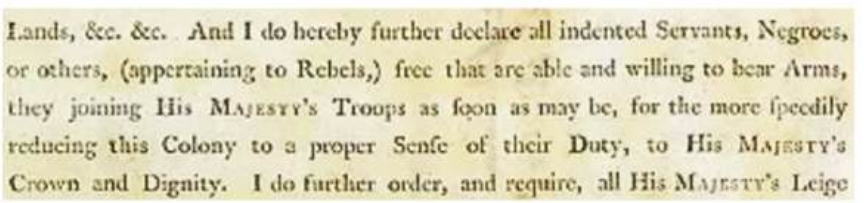
> *"Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"2*

It is obvious to everyone who hears it that Patrick Henry, a slaveholder, held some cognitive dissonance he probably didn't even notice.

All the slaveowning patriots...George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, et al...believed the same paradox.

One man decided to exploit that paradox.

The Virginia Proclamation


Lands, &c. &c. And I do hereby further declare all indented Servants, Negroes, or others, (appertaining to Rebels,) free that are able and willing to bear Arms, they joining His MAJESTY's Troops as ſoon as may be, for the more ſpeedily reducing this Colony to a proper Senſe of their Duty, to His MAJESTY's Crown and Dignity. I do further order, and require, all His MAJESTY's Leige

The Black Loyalists' story began when John Murray, the Earl of Dunmore, Royal Governor of Virginia, came up with a brilliant plan to thwart the pesky colonists making noises about rebellion. He set able-bodied male slaves free. All they had to do was get to him.

To Dunmore's mind, the plan had many possible positive outcomes:

1. It would deprive plantation owners of field laborers, forcing them to stay home and work their fields themselves and stop meeting in Williamsburg to plot rebellions.
2. It would cost slaveowners money, as one able-bodied man could fetch hundreds of dollars in a slave auction.3
3. It would force the colonists to stay home to make sure their slaves didn't run away.
4. It would supply the British army with manpower, freeing their soldiers to fight rather than dig ditches.
5. It would disrupt society.

> "And I do hereby further declare all indented Servants, Negroes, and others, (appertaining to Rebels), free that are able and willing to bear Arms, they joining His MAJESTY'S Troops as soon as may be..."4

The plan didn't end up helping Dunmore, who fled Virginia in 1776.5 But for black Virginians, the Virginia Proclamation he issued in November 1775 worked even better than he had anticipated. The

numbers were incredible. Men, their families threatened with punishment, brought their wives and children, adding cooks, laundresses, and nurses to the army. In two short months, between 800 and 3000 blacks reached the British line in Virginia alone, including 40 who escaped from George Washington.

GIVEN under my Hand on board the Ship WILLIAM, off Norfolk, the 7th Day of November, in the SIXTEENTH Year of His Majesty's Reign.

DUNMORE.

(GOD save the KING.)

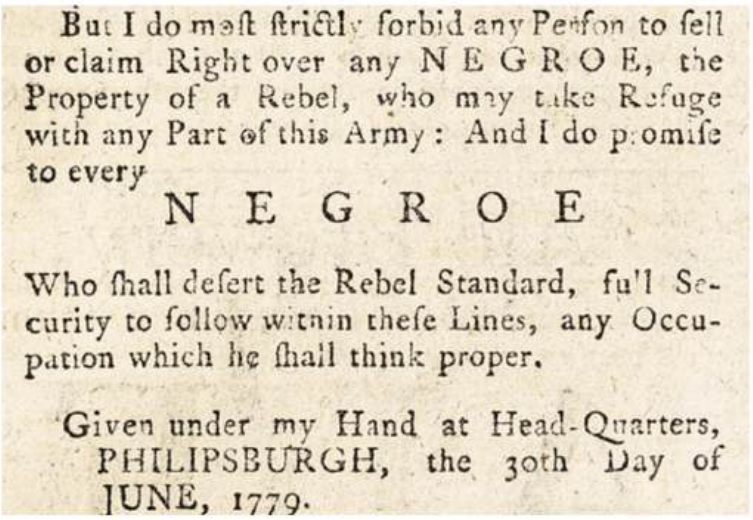
In only one month, 300 to 800 men made it to the British Army, becoming the first African-American regiment in US history, the Royal Ethiopian Regiment. Enlisted men were even paid one pound, one guinea for joining. Their uniforms displayed their purpose: the words "Liberty to Slaves."6

The Royal Ethiopians fought in two battles: the Battle of Kemp's Landing and the Battle of Great Bridge. They prevailed in the first, with one former slave even capturing his previous owner.

But Dunmore was defeated and driven from Virginia in the second. Many of the Royal Ethiopians died of typhus and malaria;7 the others moved north and regrouped into the Black Pioneers.8

Dunmore only had jurisdiction over Virginia. But the Virginia Proclamation had been printed all over the colonies.9 Twenty thousand slaves would gain freedom during the war.10 The dam had burst.

The Philipsburgh Proclamation


But I do moſt ſtrictly forbid any Perſon to ſell or claim Right over any NEGROE, the Property of a Rebel, who may take Refuge with any Part of this Army: And I do promiſe to every

NEGROE

Who ſhall deſert the Rebel Standard, full Security to follow within theſe Lines, any Occupation which he ſhall think proper.

Given under my Hand at Head-Quarters, PHILIPSBURGH, the 30th Day of JUNE, 1779.

The potential to be free exploded in 1779 when the Philipsburgh Proclamation was issued by Sir Henry Clinton, Commander in Chief of the British Army, headquartered in New York. It promised freedom and protection:

> "I do most strictly forbid any Person to sell or claim Right over any NEGROE, the Property of a Rebel, who may take Refuge with any Part of this Army."11

Moreover, the Philipsburgh Proclamation welcomed both men and women, with their children. It gave them the opportunity to follow, within the army, "any Occupation he shall think proper."12 Enslaved people weren't used to acting as a family; they weren't used to having a choice; and they certainly weren't used to being asked their opinion as to what they thought proper.

Written as war measures, the proclamations freed the slaves held by rebels, not Loyalists. However, the majority of southern independence-seekers were large plantation owners from the eastern Tidewater. Americans living upcountry in the frontier had different interests than the coastal elites. They were naturally in opposition to the rich, so they were Loyalists. And they didn't have slaves.

Furthermore, the proclamations angered slaveholders and drove them into the rebel camp. The Declaration of Independence specifically lists that King George "has excited domestic insurrections against us" as one of the grievances causing America to break away from England.13

Free blacks worked for the army also. The Loyalist raiders along the New Jersey coast were integrated, many blacks being pilots. (See my post on my 4th great-grandfather William Rowland, Armed Boatman, https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/william-rowland-armed-boatman-1742)

Escaped slaves took advantage of the chaos to move wherever they wanted. The numbers of slaves who fled bondage to work for the British Army vary widely. That's to be expected in a time without data, during a war, with propaganda on both sides. But it was definitely the biggest drop in slavery as a whole until the Civil War.

Famous Black Loyalists include:

- **Colonel Tye**, military commander of the powerful Black Brigade in New Jersey14

- **Boston King,** widely-published author, soldier, missionary, and a founder of Sierra Leone15

- **Harry Washington**, escapee from George, soldier in the Royal Ethiopian Regiment and Black Pioneers who fought at Charlestown, settler of Birchtown, Nova Scotia, reformer in Sierra Leone16

- **Rose Fortune**, carter, businesswoman, and first female law enforcement officer in North America17

Rose Fortune: Image from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rose_Fortune

There were, to be sure, some slaves who earned their freedom from fighting on the Patriot side. Some slaveowners "donated" their slaves to the Continental Army and they were emancipated. The First Regiment of Rhode Island was an integrated unit in which any slave was promised manumission for serving; that promise was only issued for four months, but it was honored for the 200 or so who served. However, the Patriot slaveholders, including Washington, were largely against freeing slaves or blacks joining the army at all.18 They didn't want to lose their property. They didn't want to arm black men or train them to fight, lest they start an uprising. The British didn't own any slaves to lose, and an uprising against rebels would have been a welcome side effect.

After the Peace

Sir Henry Clinton had postwar plans for emancipation. He even wanted to give newly-freed slaves the lands the rebels would be

forced to forfeit.19 Lord Dunmore had already enraged Virginians by threatening.

When British General Cornwallis surrendered at the Battle of Yorktown in 1781, he abandoned his black soldiers to their fate, return to slavery. The peace agreement, signed in September of 1782, stated that everything that had been stolen in war was to be returned.21 So Black Loyalists had good reason to fear they were next. American slavers traveled to New York City, where Loyalists, black and white, had taken refuge at British Army headquarters. The blacks living there witnessed slave owners kidnap their former slaves, or anyone, and bring them back to bondage. It was terrifying.

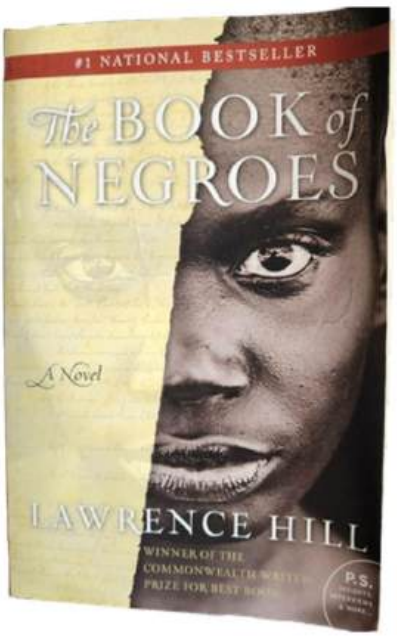
But when General Carleton arrived to manage the withdrawal, the conversation went something like this:

> *American General George Washington: "We won the war. We want all our property back that you took."*
>
> *British General Sir Guy Carleton: "Sure. Here it is."*
>
> *Washington: "You haven't returned the slaves yet."*
>
> *Sir Guy: "They are not property. They are people. What's more, they are either soldiers or employees of the British Army."*
>
> *Washington: "Whatever. We won the war. We want a list of runaway slaves and their masters and they better be returned."*
>
> *Sir Guy: "Ok, I'll get you a list."*
>
> *As the Black Loyalists boarded the ships to Nova Scotia, British General Samuel Birch logged them in.*
>
> *Washington: "I'm back and I want American slaves."*
>
> *Sir Guy: "I made these people a promise. I won't go back on my word. If I did, I would bring dishonor on my name."*
>
> *Washington: "Promises made to slaves don't count. You must be crazy."*
>
> *Washington tried several more times before he gave up and went away. The Black Loyalists named their new home Birchtown in honor of General Birch.*

Sir Guy was determined not to repeat the debacle of Yorktown and to uphold what he felt was just. He compromised that compensation for freed slaves would be made to their former owners. Therefore, all blacks leaving New York with the British for other colonies were issued certificates proving their freedom. As the Black Loyalists

boarded the ships to evacuate to liberty, General Birch catalogued names, descriptions, relationships, former masters, dates, and what work they did for the British.22

This log book became known as the Book of Negroes. It doesn't just give their descendants more genealogical information than white Loyalists have. The Book provides them with the most colonial-era information on individual African-American ancestors that exists.



The Book of Negroes, an unforgettable masterpiece of a novel by Lawrence Hill, creates and follows a Black Loyalist's life, https://www.lawrencehill.com/the-book-of-negroes

Officially granted free status, 3000 to 3500 blacks were evacuated to Nova Scotia, and others to British ports in England and Florida, over the spring and summer of 1783. The first, the L'Abondance, sailed on July 31, 1783 for Shelburne, Nova Scotia, with a crew of 81: seamen, a gunner, a carpenter, a carpenter's mate, a cook, a clerk, and a surgeon. The Black Loyalists numbered 179 men, 147 women, and 84 children.23

This 1788 watercolour sketch by Captain William Booth, Corps of Engineers, is the earliest known image of an African Nova Scotian.

From https://archives.novascotia.ca/africanns/archives/?ID=39

Shelburne was a massive exercise in what not to do when you are building a new city. The plan was flawed from the start. Beginning a city without an underlying industry was unworkable. Expecting city-dwellers to create something out of the wilderness was unrealistic. Thinking that disbanded soldiers would be productive without clear direction led to disaster.

The 1500 or so Black Loyalists in Shelburne had plenty of work in the early boom months, when ships were pouring in and everyone expected, however anxiously, quick land grants. They earned good money as builders, servants, and porters unloading ships and delivering goods to new houses. Preacher David George was so compelling, blacks had a growing integrated church and their own school.24 But when the ships stopped coming, the settlers' money was spent, the government rations had run out, and the land grants still hadn't been completed, all that ended.

The blacks largely lived in a section on the north end of the harbor, unsurprisingly called Blacktown. Without shelter in the terribly cold winters, they built themselves pit houses. Crude shelters dug into the ground, they were meant to be temporary, but when the land grants didn't come thru, Black Loyalists lived in them at least until 1792.25

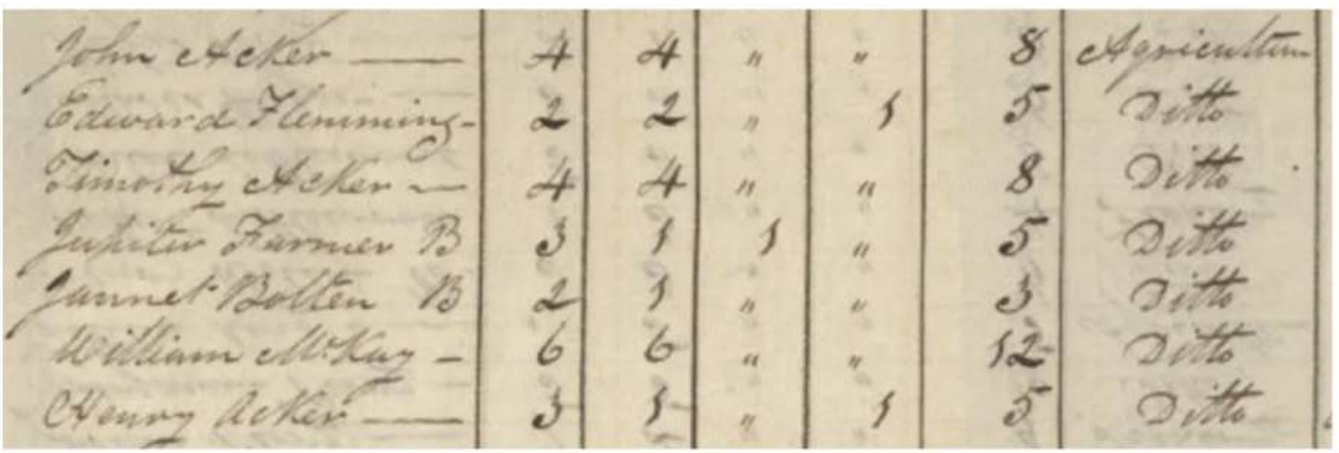
replica of a pit house, photo from https://www.facebook.com/BlackLoyalistHeritageCentre, June 17 2026

Birchtown, intended for the Black Loyalists, was surveyed and laid out early, in August 1783. It is however, among the rockiest and poorest soil in the rocky poor soil of Shelburne. Surveyor Marston even wondered why the Black Pioneer regiment's Colonel Stephen Blucke approved of it.26 I'm sure, if it were me, I would have agreed to accept any plot in order to become a landowner. Some blacks

immediately set up residence there, while others lived in town closer to work.

In June 1784, North America's first race riot was perpetrated by angry disbanded soldiers. Their lack of income or land grants was blamed on working blacks. After driving blacks out of Shelburne and destroying Blacktown, they continued their attacks in Birchtown, where the displaced blacks had fled. The governor sent troops to stop the ten days of rioting. After that, all hope of Black Loyalists getting their land grants was over.27

Conditions were so bad that 1200 people took up a British abolitionist society's offer to settle a new country in Sierra Leone, Africa.28

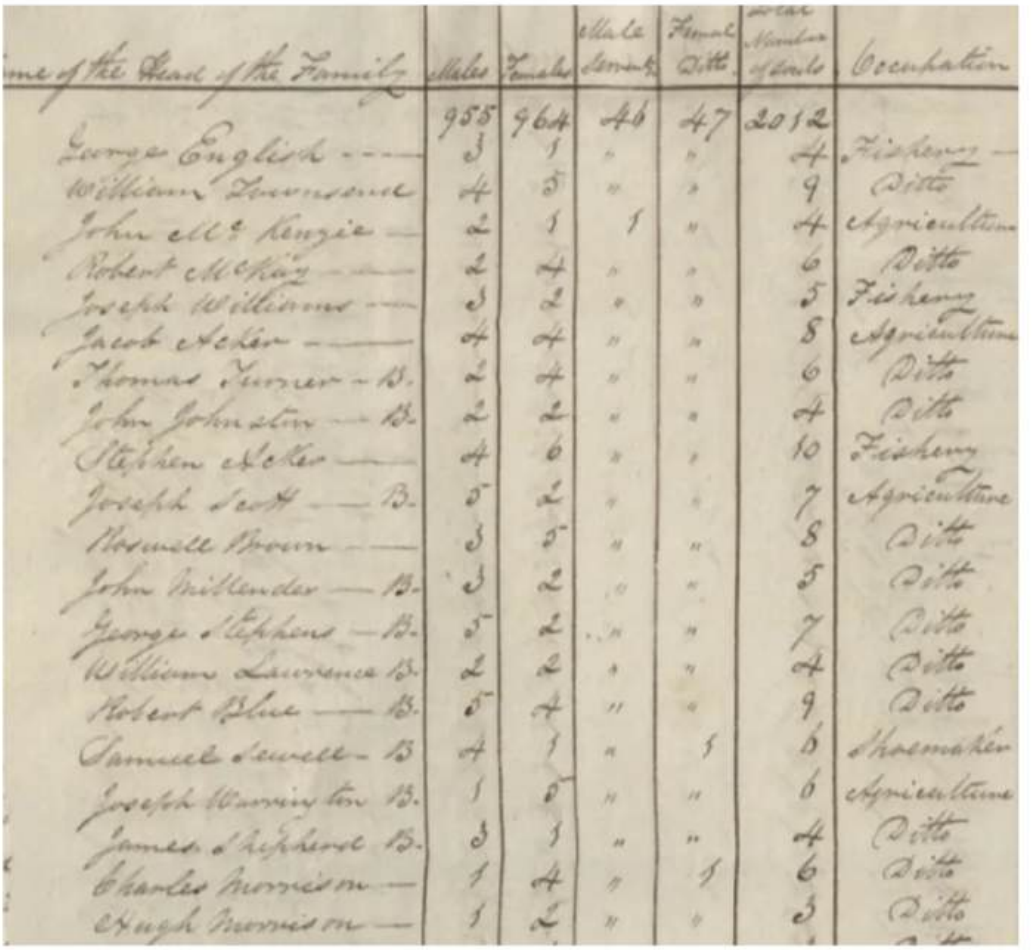


John Acker	4	4	"	"	8	Agriculture
Edward Flemming	2	2	"	1	5	Ditto
Timothy Acker	4	4	"	"	8	Ditto
Jupiter Farmer B	3	1	1	"	5	Ditto
Jannet Bolten B	2	1	"	"	3	Ditto
William McKay	6	6	"	"	12	Ditto
Henry Acker	3	1	"	1	5	Ditto

This 1827 census above shows an integrated community, with my ancestors, the Ackers, and their black neighbors, Jupiter Farmer, Jannet Bolten, Thomas Turner, John Johnston, Joseph Scott, John Millender, George Stephens, William Lawrence, Robert Blue, Samuel Sewell, Joseph Warrington, and James Shepherd.

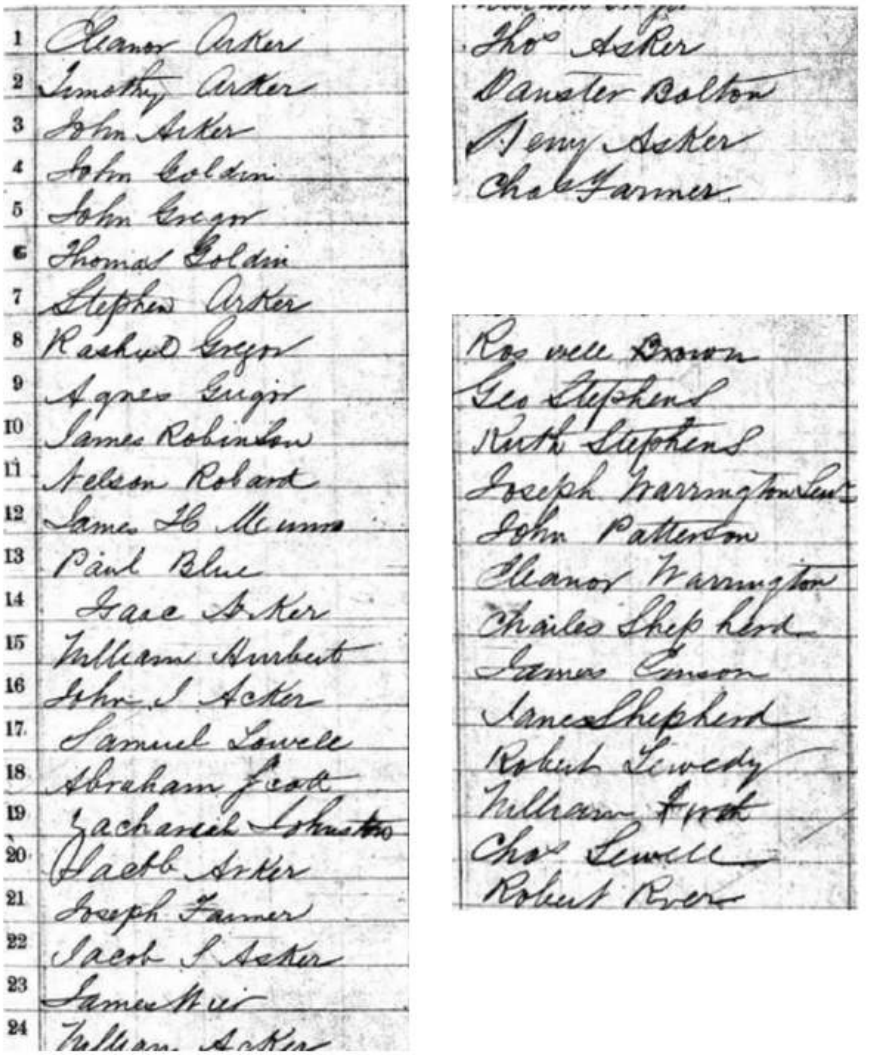
All the black heads of household were employed in agriculture except Samuel Sewell, a shoemaker. Except for one fisherman, my family were also farmers.29

By 1838, Jupiter Farmer's family has extended to Charles Farmer, Paul and his wife T. Farmer, and Joseph and his wife S. Farmer. Demps and his wife E. Bolton live where Jannet Bolten was. Thomas Turner has given way to Paul and his wife J. Turner. John Johnston is living alone. Joseph and Mrs. S. Scot are still there. The Millender family is now Mrs. Millener and John with his wife S. Millener. George and R. Stevence are still there. Samuel and Mrs. R. Suel are now next to Mrs. P. Warrington and Joseph and Mrs. M. Warrington. James and his wife J. Shepard complete the neighborhood.



Name of the Head of the Family	Males	Females	Male Servants	Female Ditto	Number of Souls	Occupation
	955	964	46	47	2012	
George English	3	1	"	"	4	Fishery
William Lawrence	4	5	"	"	9	Ditto
John McKenzie	2	1	1	"	4	Agriculture
Robert McKay	2	4	"	"	6	Ditto
Joseph Williams	3	2	"	"	5	Fishery
Jacob Acker	4	4	"	"	8	Agriculture
Thomas Turner B.	2	4	"	"	6	Ditto
John Johnston B.	2	2	"	"	4	Ditto
Stephen Acker	4	6	"	"	10	Fishery
Joseph Scott B.	5	2	"	"	7	Agriculture
Roswell Brown	3	5	"	"	8	Ditto
John Millender B.	3	2	"	"	5	Ditto
George Stephens B.	5	2	"	"	7	Ditto
William Lawrence B.	2	2	"	"	4	Ditto
Robert Blue B.	5	4	"	"	9	Ditto
Samuel Sewell B.	4	1	"	1	6	Shoemaker
Joseph Warrington B.	1	5	"	"	6	Agriculture
James Shepherd B.	3	1	"	"	4	Ditto
Charles Morrison	1	4	"	1	6	Ditto
Hugh Morrison	1	2	"	"	3	Ditto

All are labourers; my ancestors are fishermen. My households have expanded from five to eight, including Mrs. Shaltus. Altho William Lawrence and Robert Blue are gone, (the Blue family must have remained without heading a household, as they reappear twenty years later), their other black neighbor households have expanded from twelve to fourteen.30



By 1861, there are now fourteen black households: Danster Bolton, Charles Farmer, Paul Blue, Samuel Sewell, Abraham Scott, Zachariah Johnston, Joseph Farmer, George Stephens, Ruth Stephens, Joseph Warrington Senior, Eleanor Warrington, Charles Shepherd, James Shepherd, and Charles Sewell. My Acker households have expanded to eleven.31

In 1881, the Birchtown census gave individual names and ethnic origins. Among 525 people, the majority of whom are related to me, 66 Africans are interspersed among the Germans, Scotch, and Irish. The names Steavens, Scott, Farmer, Sheppherd, and Warrington are well represented. Almost every man in Birchtown is a fisherman or farmer.32

At the 1921 census in Birchtown, there were 43 households, all but one of whom owned their homes. My family made up 20 households. There were 9 households with "Negro" listed as their ethnic group,

with house size between 2 and 5 rooms. The households of "English" descent were sized between 2 and 9 rooms.33

In 1931, the most recent census available, not much had changed. Of 42 households, 23 held my family members and 7 households were made up of people of "Negro" descent. Everyone owned their own home, altho the houses of descendants of Black Loyalists were valued at $200 to $300 compared to the $600 to $1000 houses of residents of "English" descent.34

Sometime between 1794, when Ester and John Acker paid taxes in Shelburne town,35 and the 1827 census, when six of their children managed households in Birchtown,36 my ancestors moved in. I have not found any deeds or land grants; I hope they didn't steal it.

The majestic and immersive Black Loyalist Heritage Centre in Birchtown taught me all this information. A curator was incredulous that, living in Virginia, I had never heard of the Virginia Proclamation. I was incredulous that my African-American colleagues, teaching American history in a majority-minority school district in Virginia, were unaware of it. Once I shared what I had learned, they saw what I saw....

Blacks in Birchtown, while poor, discriminated against, landless, starving, and attacked, were free, educated, connected with their families, and documented in detail with these families. At the same time, blacks in Virginia were treated like livestock. It was illegal to teach them to read. They could be maimed, killed, and sold away from their families forever. Their only documentation was as property, not people.

America wins and we are not safe. We are Black Loyalists! Freedom's army marches on!
Run fall rise fall. Onward with courage and faith.
For too long hope was gone.
But hope is found in unexpected places.
Onward though the night is cold.
Onward though the night is long.
Day is breaking. A new day dawns.

Inside the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre, Birchtown, photo from alamy.com

The Book of Negroes personifies the transition from one reality into another. Intended to be just another bureaucratic ledger of merchandise, the kind that erased people, it instead became a great act of preservation.

The ideal of the Revolutionary War was freedom. It came for many blacks living in bondage. Just not in the way we think.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

An excellent detailed source is https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/lord-dunmores-ethiopian-regiment/.

A detailed source for Black Loyalists in New York is https://www.gothamcenter.org/blog/black-loyalists-evaculation-zy4la

A primary source for the Royal Ethiopian regiment is https://www.royalprovincial.com/military/rhist/ethiopian/ethreports.htm.

A very detailed text is https://blackloyalist.com/cdc/index.htm.

I used Claude.ai to help me edit for errors.

FOOTNOTES

1. *History and Social Science Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools, April 2023, Board of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia*
2. *https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/patrick.asp*
3. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slave_trade_in_the_United_States - price of adult male in Richmond in 1849*
4. *https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/lord-dunmores-proclamation-1775*
5. *https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/lord-dunmores-ethiopian-regiment/*
6. *https://lord-dunmores-ethiopian-regiment/*
7. *https://lord-dunmores-ethiopian-regiment/*
8. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Company_of_Pioneers*
9. *https://www.gilderlehrman.org/*
10. *https://www.amrevmuseum.org/black-founders-big-idea-2-black-soldiers-and-sailors-in-the-revolutionary-war*
11. *https://www.philipsemanorhall.com/blog/the-philipsburg-proclamation*
12. *https://philipsemanorhall.com/the-philipsburg-proclamation*
13. *https://www.gilderlehrman.org/*

14. *https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/colonel-tye*

15. *https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/boston-king-and-the-black-loyalists-of-the-american-revolution-0*

16. *https://american-revolution-experience.battlefields.org/people/harry-washington#washington-modern-day-legacy*

17. *https://annapolisheritagesociety.com/community-history/notable-personalities-past/rose-fortune-privileged-character/*

18. *DiSanto, Victor J. from: Hufeland, Westchester County During the Revolution, 324, 379; John Lockwood Romer, Historical Sketches of the Romer, Van Tassell, and Allied Families, and Tales of the Neutral Ground (Buffalo: W.C. Kay Publishing Company, 1917), 46-47, 53 and 93; Lincoln Diamont, Yankee Doodle Days (Fleishmanns: Purple Mountain Press, 1996), 116-117; Robert Howe to Washington, July 8, 1780, founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-27-02-0028; Barnett Schecter, The Battle for New York (New York: Walker and Company, 2002), 350; Sy Shepard, Patriot vs. Loyalist (New York: Osprey Publishing, 2022), 34.*

19. *https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/lord-dunmores-proclamation/*

20. *https://blackloyalist.com/cdc/index.htm*

21. *blackloyalist.com/cdc*

22. *blackloyalist.com/cdc*

23. *https://uelac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Loyalists-Evacuation-Vessels-Stephen-Davidson-2025.pdf*

24. *blackloyalist.com/cdc*

25. *blackloyalist.com/cdc*

26. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Company_of_Pioneers*

27. *blackloyalist.com/cdc*

28. *blackloyalist.com/cdc*

29. *Census Returns, 1827, archives.novascotia.ca*

30. *Census Returns, 1838, archives.novascotia.ca*

31. *1861 census of Canada for Isaac Acker, Shelburne, NS, Ancestry.com*

32. *1881 census of Canada for Isaac Acker, West Township of Shelburne, NS, Ancestry.com*

33. *1921 census of Canada for Isaac Acker, Birchtown, NS, Ancestry.com*

34. *1921 census of Canada for Isaac Acker, Birchtown, NS, Ancestry.com*

35. *Poll Tax Records, 1791-1795, archives.novascotia.ca*

36. *Census Returns, 1827, archives.novascotia.ca*

Article shared from https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/black-loyalists-of-the-american-revolution

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Anne Wendel

MAUREEN TAYLOR

Maureen Taylor, The Photo Detective ® helps clients with photo related genealogical problems. She's made appearances on The View, The Today Show, Pawn Stars, and others.

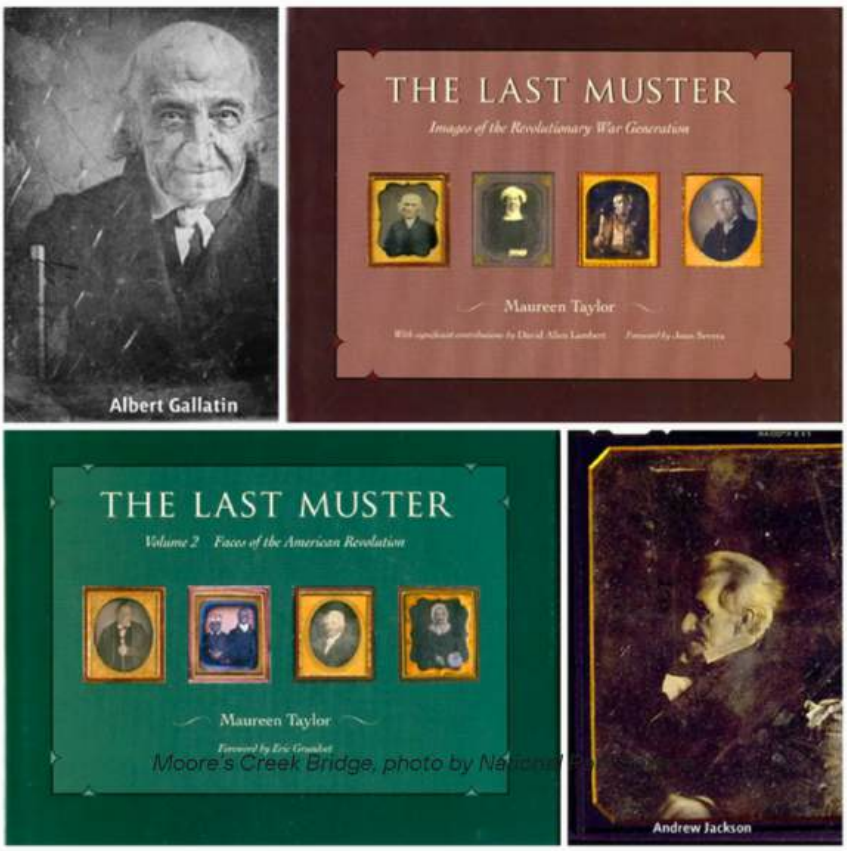
She blogs from both Substack.com/@photodetective, and her website at https://maureentaylor.com/

SCAN ME

1776–1783

TRACKING DOWN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR GENERATION

The stories of the 250th mesmerize us. Their faces transport us to the past and leave us wanting to know more.



I remember the moment. The clarity and surprise of looking at an image and discovering history I hadn't considered. It was at a conference. I was looking at photos brought by attendees. A man in a tweed suit held out a cased image and smiled. " This is my ancestor who spent the war of the Revolution in Bermuda as a Loyalist."

I paused. Looked at him. Examined the photo and inwardly gasped. The thought ran through my mind, "If he has one, how many more could there be?" I set out to find out.

The project is called The Last Muster. Two books, a museum exhibit, and three films later, the work continues. The goal is to find as many images of men, women, and children who lived during the American Revolution but who lived into the age of photography. In the twenty-plus years since I gazed at that photo, there is no doubt that it is possible to use photographic and documentary evidence to recreate the first generation of Americans. While there are images in public collections or owned by collectors, many individuals have these photographs in their family collections.

Each image has to be assessed through primary source research and photographic evidence to make sure the person depicted lived during those war years. It is a painstaking process.

The photos include veterans of different backgrounds, loyalists, women who nursed soldiers, and children who witnessed battles. Their stories are riveting, and their treatment after the war can be heartbreaking.

Article shared from https://photodetective.substack.com/p/tracking-down-the-revolutionary-war

Copyright 2026 Maureen Taylor

1776–1776

Garry blogs from
.https://garryemoore.substack.com/

SCAN ME

PIONEERS OF HUNTING CREEK, CALL TO ARMS IN 1776

Racing Across North Carolina to Fight the Scott Loyalists at Moore's Creek Bridge

Moore's Creek Bridge, photo by National Park Service

The Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge occurred on February 27, 1776, less than five months before the Declaration of Independence was signed. It was the first battle of the Revolutionary War that took place in North Carolina.

"King George and Broadswords!" shouted the Scottish Highlanders and former Regulators as they executed a Highland Charge against North Carolina Patriots on Moore's Creek Bridge about 18 miles north of Wilmington, North Carolina. They were met by musket and artillery fire from 1,100 Patriots.

Although only a minor, 30-minute skirmish, the 800-man Loyalist forces were utterly defeated by the North Carolina minutemen and militia forces. On the patriot side, there was one killed and one wounded. The Loyalists suffered 30 killed, 20 wounded, and 850 captured.

The British forces would not threaten North Carolina again until 1780. This dramatic victory ended British authority in the colony and was the preamble to the April 1776 Halifax Resolves, which allowed the North Carolina delegates to the Continental Congress to support American independence. This would also be the last recorded "Highland Charge" in history.

The Patriot forces at Moore's Creek Bridge included men from the 1st and 2nd Battalion of the Salisbury district Minutemen led by Col. Griffith Rutherford (1721-1805) and Col. Thomas Polk (1732-1794), Halifax District Militia, Hillsborough District Militia, New Bern District Militia, Salisbury District Militia, and Wilmington District Militia units.

While not every company in each unit made it in time for the fighting, there were three companies from the Surry County Regiment of Militia led by Col. Martin Armstrong that came the furthest distance to the fight at Moore's Creek Bridge. These three Surry County Regiment companies were led by Captains Abiel Cobb, John Hamlin, and William Shepherd. Captain Hamlin's company of patriots were from the Hunting Creek area of Wilkes, Rowan and Surry Counties. Included in this company was one of my Campbell family ancestors, William Campbell, who I wrote about previously in my article on the Pioneers of Hunting Creek.

1795 Map of North Carolina by Samuel Lewis showing the location of the Hamlin's Old Store (Gray) and Moore's Creek Bridge (light green), a distance of 217 miles that Captain Hamlin company rode to battle

The following explanations will give the reader some context about these events in 1776 and Surry County Regiment.

North Carolina Militia Regiments

North Carolina militia regiments were county based and relied on farmer-soldiers that served for individual campaigns. The soldiers would usually return home for planting and harvesting of their crops. In addition to the Surry County Regiment, there was a Rowan County Regiment of Militia established earlier on August 1, 1775. The Wilkes County Regiment of Militia would not be established until December 9, 1777.

The militia regiments drew troops from young men throughout Surry, Wilkes, and Rowan counties and soldiers often served in different regiments each time they volunteered. A regiment consisted of between 8 and 10 companies, each commanded by a captain. There was a lieutenant, an Ensign, a Sergeant, a Corporal, and up to 50 or 100 privates (including drummers, fifers, etc.) reporting to each captain. There are few surviving records of the units. The information about the men serving in these regiments comes mainly from the pension applications that the soldiers filed for their service after 1832.

The captains were active in recruiting the soldiers for their company and often lived in the same proximity as the soldiers that served with them. Many of the soldiers were born in Virginia and were the earliest settlers in Rowan, Wilkes, and Surry counties in the 1770s.

Surry County Regiment

The Surry County Regiment was established on August 26, 1775 with Col. Martin Armstrong (1739-1808) as its commander. Col. Armstrong was born in Augusta County, Virginia. The Armstrong family moved from Virginia to Anson County, North Carolina in about 1750, where they settled on the banks of the Catawba River. Martin was appointed commissioner to run the dividing line between Rowan County and the new county of Surry in 1770. One landmark mentioned in the survey for this dividing line in 1778 was the Hamlin Store.

As a surveyor, land was Martin Armstrong's livelihood. He had more than fifty land patents in Surry County and was a slave owner. He had gained military experience as an Indian fighter on both the Virginia and North Carolina frontiers.

Captain Hamlin's Company

Captain John Hamlin's (sometimes referred to as Hamblin) company during the Moore's Creek Bridge campaign consisted of at least 12

soldiers, including at least two from Hunting Creek in Rowan County and Wilkes County.

Details of the life of Captain Hamlin are not well known from surviving records. He was probably related to the owner of Hamlin's Old Store, which was located near the lower part of the Surry County and Wilkes County line. The store was about 12 to 15 miles from the Wilkes County Court House and 30 miles from the Surry County Court House. The store was located on the land of Abraham Cook and specifically near the modern-day intersection of Union Baptist Church Road and Somers Road, according to Abraham Cook's North Carolina Land Grant entered in 1780. The store was 8 miles north of Hunting Creek. Hamlin's store is mentioned in 21 pension applications as a rendezvous point, mustering place, parade ground, or stationing place for militia units. It was reported that the neighborhood around the store was infested with Loyalists. There was some sort of affair that took place at the store on December 29, 1780.

Hamlin's Storehouse was mentioned in the survey defining the dividing line between Surry and Wilkes counties in 1778 in which Martin Armstrong participated. The line began on the Rowan County line about a mile below Daniel Rash's land grant at a white oak standing in the head of a branch of Hunting Creek and went north across the Mulberry Fields Road about a half a mile below (upstream or east) "Hamlin's Old Store House".

1795 Map of North Carolina by Samuel Lewis showing the location of the Hamlin's Old Store (Gray) and Moore's Creek Bridge (light green), a distance of 217 miles that Captain Hamlin company rode to battle

I could not find any land grants for John Hamlin, but I did find a William Hamlin with land in Surry County on the north side of Fishers River in 1791 and on the east side of Fisher River in 1823. The relationship between John and William Hamlin is not known. John Hamlin, along with Benjamin Cleveland, were members of the Surry County Committee of Safety, which was a county level organization that did the initial planning in 1775 for the militias and other preparations for the war.

Captains were generally older than the privates that served under them, so John Hamlin was probably about 25 years old in 1776. While he did survive the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, where and when he died is not known.

Captain Hamlin's Company

There are records for only four of the soldiers that served under Captain Hamlin.

A 27-year-old Benjamin Herndon (1749-1819) served as a Lieutenant under Captain Hamlin. He was living on the middle fork of Hunting Creek in Wilkes County before the war. He would go on to serve as a Captain in the Wilkes County Regiment. He was born in Fredericksburg, Virginia and died in Newberry County, South Carolina.

The names of any ensigns, sergeants, or corporals under Captain Hamlin are lost to history.

A 19-year-old William Campbell (1756-1840), the oldest son of Adam Campbell, was one of the privates in Captain Hamlin's s company. He served for six weeks in 1776 and was discharged after the battle at Cross Creek (modern-day Fayetteville), North Carolina, where he may have been guarding Loyalist-prisoners captured during the battle.

This was the first of several campaigns in which William served in North Carolina militia regiments during the American Revolution. In 1776, his father was still living and he was single and working the land on Hunting Creek with his parents and siblings. He was the oldest son in the family and the first to join the militia. His younger brother, John Campbell, was just 17 and had not yet volunteered. His youngest brother, Perciphull, was just 9 in 1776 and did not serve in the military during the war. William would serve in additional campaigns with the Wilkes County Regiment, Mecklenburg County Regiment, and Rowan County Regiment, as well as serving with the Continental Shoe Factory in Rowan County. He was born in Culpeper County, Virginia and died in Bureau County, Illinois.

A 29-year-old **James Garrison** (1747-after 1832) served as a private under Captain Hamlin. He was living on Camp Creek in Wilkes County before the war. He would continue serving in campaigns with the Surry County Regiment and the North Carolina Light Dragoons until 1781. He was born on Mar 11, 1747 in Fredericktown, Pennsylvania and died in Greene County, Illinois.

A 22-year-old **William Johnson** (1754-after 1832) served as a private under Captain Hamlin. After the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, he was part of a twelve-soldier contingent assigned to guard the Tory prisoners at Cross Creek. He was discharged and returned home in April 1776. He was born in Amelia County, Virginia.

He moved with his father to Johnston County (now Wake County), North Carolina at a young age. They removed to Rowan County (the part that became Surry County) when he was seventeen. He died in Wilkes County.

Postlude

While Hamlin's Old Store is a cornerstone of local Revolutionary War pension records, its exact story and geographic footprint have never been fully compiled in print until now.

The war brought these early settlers together in the common cause of liberty that endures today. After the war, many families moved west and never reconnected with their fellow patriots again. We honor these veterans 250 years after their service in the American Revolution by retelling their stories. In future articles, I will look at other units in which the residents of Hunting Creek served, as well as a few known Loyalists in the area.

Do you have ancestors from North Carolina that served in the American Revolution? If so, add their names and counties in the comments to see if they might have crossed paths with my ancestors.

REFERENCES

- *The American Revolution in North Carolina, (https://www.carolana.com/NC/Revolution/home.html) online database, by J. D. Lewis*
- *Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, (https://www.nps.gov/mocr/learn/historyculture/battle-of-moores-creek-bridge.htm) National Park Service*
- *NC Land Grant Images and Data, (https://www.nclandgrants.com) by the NC Historical Records Online, from source data from the State Archives of North Carolina*
- *Revolutionary War Pension Application Transcripts, (https://revwarapps.org) by William T. Graves; Links to transcripts for William Campbell, S32162 (https://revwarapps.org/s32162.pdf); James Garrison, S32260 (https://revwarapps.org/s32260.pdf); and William Johnson, S7095 (https://revwarapps.org/s7095.pdf)*
- *"Roster of the Patriots in the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge," by Dr. Bobby Gilmer Moss (1992)*
- *See also Stories250*

Notes

- *Col. Rutherford was born in Ireland and came to Rowan County in 1753. After the war, he surveyed most of the land grants on Hunting Creek in Rowan County, including my Campbell ancestors on Hunting Creek-- William, John, and Elizabeth Campbell.*
- *The town of Wilkesboro, North Carolina was not founded until 1800. Mulberry Fields primarily refers to the historic name for the area that is now Wilkesboro. The Mulberry Fields Road connected Wachovia (modern-day Winston-Salem) with Mulberry Fields.*

Article shared from https://garryemoore.substack.com/p/pioneers-of-hunting-creek-call-to

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Garry E. Moore

RICK LEONARD

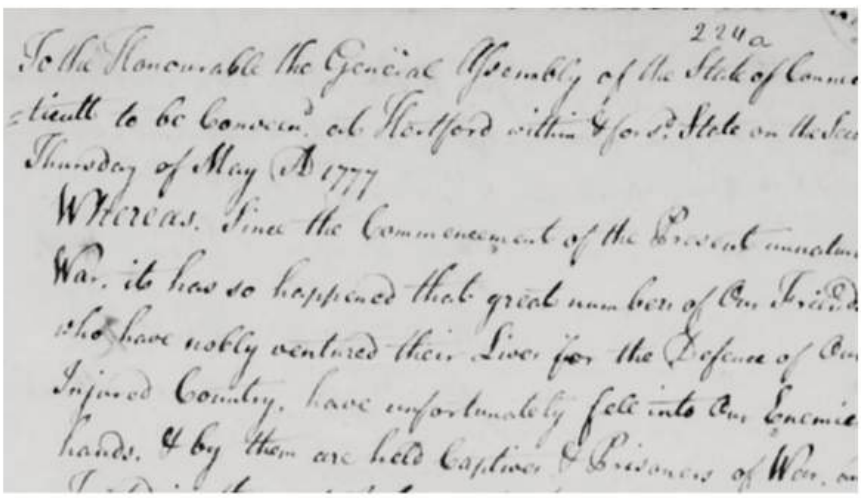
1777–1777

PATRIOTIC SERVICE IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Honoring Israel Standish (1721-1802) and his stand on principles

Share the journey to document one family's history, as well as tips, tricks, and lessons learned along the way! They blog at https://substack.com/@anamericangenealogy

SCAN ME



224a

To the Honourable the General Assembly of the State of Connecticutt to be Conveen.d at Hertford within & for s.d State on the Second Thursday of May AD 1777

Whereas. Since the Commencement of the Present unnatural War, it has so happened that great numbers of Our Friends who have nobly ventured their Lives for the Defence of Our Injured Country, have unfortunately fell into Our Enemies hands, & by them are held Captives & Prisoners of War, on

With the arrival of the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the United States there's renewed interest in all our patriot ancestors, and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) have been helping us establish the genealogical lines to those patriots for well over 100 years. The most common route to establishing a patriot ancestor is establishing them as soldiers in the Revolutionary War, and we have 20 or so DAR ancestors who followed that pattern. But we want to examine one ancestor who highlights a lesser-known path to being recognized as a patriot by the DAR: Patriotic Service.

Patriotic service covers those nascent Americans who didn't pick up arms to fight the British, but still provided material support for the revolution. This could include providing funds or supplies to the Continental Army, or signing an oath of allegiance or a petition to support the cause.

In 1777 the US Revolution wasn't going particularly well for the States. The siege of Boston had been broken in 1776, but the ousted British troops had sailed to New York and established control over the city, soon driving General Washington's army off of Long Island and then out of New York completely. The British had captured a large number of prisoners of war from various battles and established their largest prisons in the New York city area. The largest, and most notorious was the Sugar House on Manhattan but the prison ships anchored off Long Island held just about as many POW's. Conditions in these prisons can only be called horrific. There were no sewage systems, the food was rotten and there was very little of it (for example a standard ration at the Sugar House was 1 pound of rotten meat and 4 pieces of moldy bread every 4 days), there was no furniture to sit or lie on, on land prisoners would sometimes receive 30 min. of fresh air a week but often times they would just be granted turns standing and breathing out the windows for 10 minutes. On the ships, due to the waste-based diseases, it was almost impossible to come out of the holds for air...and if a prisoner could make it up the ladder the deck was usually so slick with excrement it wasn't possible to stand (The Prisoners of New York). Mortality rates for captured Revolutionary soldiers was 75%, and the descriptions of their conditions can only be matched by the description of the conditions on the ships that traversed enslaved humans across the Atlantic for centuries.

It's under this cloud of mistreatment that 32 men from Connecticut signed a petition to the newly formed General Assembly of Connecticut on 5 May 1777, pleading for the body to interve on the behalf of citizens of that State who were being held in New York. The petitioners are clear they are in favor of the revolution, and call those who risked their life for the cause as "noble", but they are clearly pained by the conditions of imprisonment calling it: inhumane, barbarous and deplorable. However, they are also honest that they have no idea how to accomplish any solution since they know we can't effectively pressure the British. They do however voice the opinion that if the Assembly can figure out how to accomplish this, the "Army [will] soon be supplied with a number of men sufficient to repel our enemies".

Text of the petition for prisoners, 1777

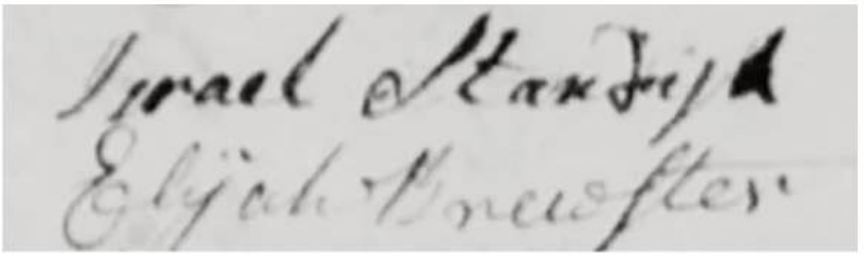
'To the Honourable the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut to be convened at Hartford within and for said State on the Second Thursday of May 1777.

"Whereas. Since the commencement of the present unnatural War, it has so happened that great number of our Friends who have nobly ventured their Life for the Defense of our Injured Country have unfortunately fell into our Enemies hands and by them are held captive and prisoners of War and treated in the most inhumane and barbarous manner many having been stripped of their clothing, exposed to the weather and denied a sufficient supply of food for the support of life and under which suffering many of our Respectable and Worth friends have lost their life: and others who still survive are yet in the same deplorable circumstances in New York and on Long Island. Suffering under the insults of the enemy and destitute of necessities and clothing or money to purchase that necessities of life; all which are so publicly known that they are undeniable facts.

"Whereupon we the subscribers inhabitants in the State aforesaid pray this Honorable Assembly to commiserate and take into consideration the disgusting condition of our Friends in captivity as aforesaid who are belonging to this State and in your wisdom devise some method for the support and relief when we know not how it can be effected without some exertion of the public and which if done by your Honour and publicly known among the people. We humbly conceive would be a very great inducement to other voluntarily to insist and engage in the cause of our country and our Army soon be supplied with a number of men sufficient to repel our enemies, or in some other way grant relief.

"As your Honours in your wisdom shall judge most reasonable and just and you memorialize as in duty bound shall memorialize as in duty bound shall coc. (?) Pray. Dated in Connecticut this 5th day of May 1777."
(https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLG-LWFZ-J)

Michael's 7xGGF Israel Standish (1721-1802) was living in Preston, Connecticut when he was one of the 32 signatories to this petition. He was the great grandchild of Mayflower passenger Myles Standish, so he likely had at least some notoriety (not as much was we'd think today, but that's for another day!), and he was an established farmer in his mid-50's. His children lived in Preston as well, and he had at least 10 grandchildren under 5 years of age at the time living near him. Even a simple petition asking for something to be done to save the son's of Connecticut from the horrors of British prisons was a deeply treasonous act. He had publicly attached himself to the cause of revolution, and he would have likely lost all that mattered to him, if not his life, had the rebellion failed.



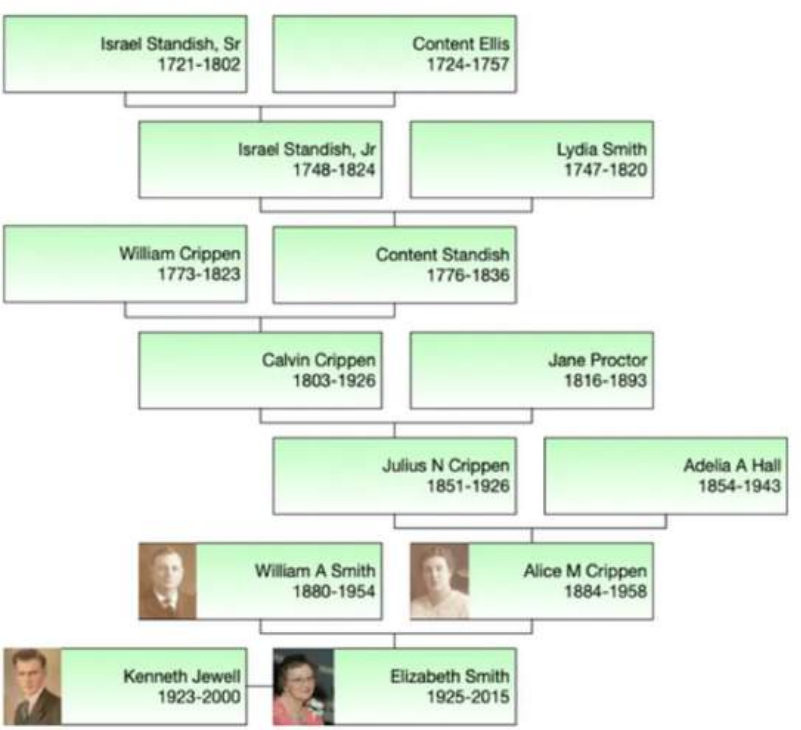
And at the time, the Americans (outside of Boston) hadn't shown much capability of defeating the British. His farm was just to the East of New York (and just across the sound from Long Island, which was easily crossed) and it was firmly under the control of the enemy. He was influential and known enough to be included in joining the petition, and doing so left him no chance for him to deny where his loyalties lied, so this was a significant act of defiance even though on the face it seems like a simple enjoinder. We can guess there would have been an effect on his neighbors. Those loyal to the cause of freedom stood up and be known as such, and there was a group on one the other side equally loyal to England, however those in the middle would have likely felt swayed by their neighbors risking everything to publicly support a United States free of the crown.

So in someways these acts of Patriotic Service had impacts as strong as those who served militarily, which is why the DAR recognizes the "simple" act of signing a petition as worthy of veneration for having served the cause of liberty.

Article shared from https://anamericangenealogy.substack.com/p/patriotic-service-in-the-revolutionary

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Rick Leonard



Israel and Content Standish's descendants

1777–1781

LIVES AND FORTUNES

Three Revolutionary War Americans

Tad Callin has been researching his family since the late 1990s and started his genealogy-only blog in 2007. He's carried that "Mightier Acorns" name through several platforms. He now blogs at https://mightieracorns.com

SCAN ME

> ***Note**: this is a fictional representation based on my research (follow links and footnotes if you want to know more). To tell this story, I made assumptions about how these men might have thought and felt, and even about how the cousins might have been related. These assumptions are based on the available facts, but they might not prove to be true as further evidence comes to light.*

James: September 1777

When Patrick, James, and Edward Callin met in Hanna's Town that late summer morning in 1777, the cousins had different goals in mind.

They were young men in their twenties who lived in the surrounding Hempfield Township, but the eldest, Patrick, already had a family of small children, while young Jim and Edward had arrived from Ireland more recently and had not yet settled down with wives. Patrick intended only to bring home what he could find at market, but his cousins did not plan to return home that day at all.

The Callin men had come to town to make a commitment.

It had been two years since the Hanna's Town Resolves were adopted on May 16, 1775, and since then, King George had sent military troops – both English regulars and German mercenaries – against his own people. Thomas Jefferson had written a Declaration of Independence that was adopted in Philadelphia and voiced some of the same complaints as the Hanna's Town Resolves. Then New York had been occupied, and even the pacifist Quakers governing Pennsylvania realized they needed to authorize a militia.

"With Our Lives and Fortunes" The Hanna's Town Resolves

Discover the history of the Hanna's Town Resolves, a document written by the citizens of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, in response to the battles of Lexington and Concord during the Revolutionary War.

Westmoreland County Historical Society · Feb 19, 2021

https://westmorelandhistory.org/history-of-the-hannas-town-resolves

"There is your recruiting officer," Patrick said, pointing towards a man in a prominent corner of the square. His uniform stood out in the crowded market, and he had posted the Militia Act, passed in March of that year, on a board behind him.

"No," said Jim, "I cannot bring myself to serve in an Army for the Friends. Cousin Edward has alerted me to another option."

"What other option? You don't mean to enlist with the Virginians, do you?" Patrick knew that as of 1776, Virginia had claimed the land of Westmoreland County, including Patrick's own farm. Patrick himself felt torn between loyalty to his adopted country and his frustration with their government, but he hadn't realized his cousins' distaste for the way the Quakers and their German neighbors governed Pennsylvania ran so deep1.

Knowing where to placed one's loyalty had become a difficult thing.

"Cousin, you know better than I do how our people have been used by these two-faced Friends!" Jim said. "They claim to want peace with French & Indian savages, then they put us out on land they aren't willing to let us defend! You know well they regard us all the same as the Paxton Boys – but now that they feel caught between the frontier and the Crown, they deign to let us fight for them?"

He turned to scan the square, and spotted another man in uniform, standing with a group of young farmers and townsmen in a less well-trafficked corner. "If I must fight either way," Jim said, "I will fight with real fighters."

Leopold: August 1779

> *"He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny," Thomas Jefferson said of King George III in the Declaration of Independence.*

As early as August 1775, when the news of the Battle at Bunker Hill reached the European continent, Prince Friedrich Wilhelm II of Hesse-Cassel offered his ranks of well-trained soldiers to the British king, knowing that Britain did not have enough troops to overtake the massive American colonies. At that time, Hesse-Cassel was one of seven principalities that made up what is now Germany.

Friedrich's officers, coming from either the ranks of the aristocracy or the middle class, were well-educated, receiving advanced instruction at the Collegium Carolinium in Cassel, where they studied foreign languages, mathematics, and engineering. The men in the ranks were culled from the peasant class, frequently stolen off the streets by gangs of recruiters, and were segregated into units of Jägers (light infantry) or artillerists. The former group was made up of the sons of gameskeepers and foresters, and the latter tended to be the sons of industrial workers from the cities. At the bottom of the hierarchy were the "expendable people" (entbehrliche Leute): school dropouts, servants, unemployed tradesmen, or wandering homeless youths who were seized off the streets by recruiting gangs. All were indoctrinated with the German concept of Dienst, or sense of service, and swore a personal oath to Prince Friedrich2.

Twenty-one-year-old Leopold Zindle found himself stepping off a cramped English ship after several uncomfortable weeks at sea, wearing the uniform of a private in the Hesse-Kassel Erbprinz Regiment. Whatever he had experienced as a boy from Essingen, and however invisible or expendable he may have been on the streets of Germany, he now found himself provided with an impressive uniform, weapons, and freedom from having to think about what to do next.

"Do as you are told," shouted the officer waiting for them to disembark, "and you will not be beaten. Fail, and you will run the gauntlet." Leopold could see two lines of 150 soldiers each, facing each other, as another solider ran between them, stripped to the waist. He watched 300 soldiers, laughing as they beat the running man with whatever clubs or weapons they had on hand, and he resolved never to be so undisciplined as to receive such treatment.

With his attention on his duties at camp, keeping watch, and endless marching, Leopold did not have much time to devote to keeping track of where his unit was, or puzzling out what their strategy was. But he couldn't help notice that the "American savages" they had been sent to subdue did not live up to the image of the dirty, drunken heathens described by their officers. Instead of finding rude huts and seedy fields, the regiment often marched past well-tended fields, and tidy towns full of well-built houses, many of which were occupied by people who spoke German!

Instead of finding rude huts and seedy fields, the regiment often marched past well-tended fields, and tidy towns full of well-built houses, many of which were occupied by people who spoke German!

Leopold's fellow soldiers shared this opinion of the American populace, but took a dimmer view of the American soldiers. More experienced men described the poorly equipped and poorly drilled Continental soldiers they had seen during their time in Rhode Island and New York. Leopold's sergeant frequently raised his canteen in mock salute to the Americans who had suffered through the famously brutal winter at Valley Forge, but had kept fighting throughout 1778 anyway.

"But of course," he would say, "They owe it all to Von Steuben!" then spit on the ground.

On the morning of August 19th, 1779, while camped at the Fort at Paulus Hook in New Jersey, Leopold was awakened by shouting just before dawn. He and his fellow soldiers scrambled to dress and prepare their weapons, but in the early morning darkness, it was impossible to know friend from foe, let alone how many foes there were. By sunup, Leopold and 157 other prisoners were being led away by the 300 or so men under the command of Major "Light Horse" Harry Lee.

The prisoners were marched inland for several days, joining a larger body of the Continental Army long enough for General Washington to work out what to do with them. Leopold was among those sent to work for Jacob Faesch of Mount Hope, where barracks were built for 200 men. Their work produced cannonballs, which Faesch sold to the Continental Army. Faesch and many of the other towsnpeople Leopold encountered spoke German dialects, which made the coming years of manual labor in this foreign land easier to face. For four years, Leopold was fed and sheltered in exchange for his labor, and he slowly learned about the people he was sent to subjugate for the British crown. Four years during which his homesickness would burn away in the coaling job and be replaced by something else.

Edward: New Year's Day, 1781

Edward and Jim joined the 4th Virginia Regiment of Foot in 1777 a week after the Battle of Brandywine. A week after that, Philadelphia was captured by the British. It was a difficult time to be a new recruit, but they soon faced the British on the battlefield at the Battle of Germantown.

Their regiment was assigned to the 4th Virginia Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General Charles Scott. The young soldiers were impressed by General Scott. They learned from their new comrades how well their unit had been handled under General Sullivan's Wing at Brandywine, where their actions bought time for Gen. Washington and the charismatic young Marquis de Lafayette to retreat without greater losses.

The first few months in the Army were grim, but at least they were together in the same regiment. They marched together into Valley Forge on 19 December 1777, and marched out again on 19 June 1778. Of the 12,000 men who established the camp, between 1,700 and 2,000 men died from outbreaks of typhoid, dysentery, influenza, pneumonia, and typhus, all made worse by the cold, wet weather and the inconsistent availability of food.

Those who survived that winter came out better trained, because Baron Friedrich von Steuben, a Prussian military officer, stepped in as drillmaster. He taught the soldiers how to use the bayonet, and most importantly, how to re-form lines quickly in the midst of battle. Sadly, a month before leaving camp, Edward was claimed by the 6th Pennsylvania Regiment, and would no longer be so close to Jim.

Their first major engagement after leaving Valley Forge was fought near the Monmouth Court House in modern day Freehold Borough, New Jersey. Jim and Edward were both once again technically under command of Gen. Charles Scott. Jim and the 4th Virginia were led by Col. William Grayson after Maj. Gen. Charles Lee shuffled his troops before the battle began. Edward was under command of Lt. Col. Josiah Harmar in Scott's detachment in the forward screen. The results of the battle were inconclusive, but the majority of losses on both sides were due to heat-related illness and the Continental Army retained possession of the battlefield. For the first time, Edward thought, victory seemed within reach.

Now that they were in different units, it was harder for Edward to keep track of Jim. He got word that Jim was sick during July and August, recovering at Camp White Plains. He also heard when Jim took furlough that winter and went home to marry.

In June of 1779, Edward's unit was deployed under Maj. Gen. Sullivan on his expedition to respond to attacks on American settlements made by Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and Loyalists during the previous year. The Haudenosaunee had supported the British during the 1777 Battles of Saratoga, as well, and Sullivan's army carried out a scorched-earth campaign that destroyed 40 villages throughout the Finger Lakes region of western New York. The campaign drove just over 5,000 Haudenosaunee to Fort Niagara seeking British protection, where many of them starved and froze the following winter, as the British were unable to supply them. This had the desired effect of stopping the attacks. It also depopulated the area for post-war settlement.

Edward's regiment spent the rest of the year in garrison at West Point and probably wintered at Morristown. Jim had returned from furlough and camped with his unit near Morristown in November 1779. The next year, Edward's regiment took part in a number of small engagements in New Jersey and again wintered at Morristown; but Jim was supposed to have been sent to serve with General Scott again. Edward knew the Virginians had marched nearly 800 miles from Morristown to Charleston, South Carolina, only for Continental General Benjamin Lincoln to surrender, but he didn't know if his cousin had marched with them. As far as he knew, Jim was being held prisoner.

He wouldn't speak at all of his experiences after the surrender at Charleston, except to say that General Scott had been betrayed, and all Virginians with him.

By this point, at the end of 1780, Edward was tired. He had served his three-year enlistment as of September, but the end of the war was nowhere in sight, harsh conditions persisted, and the army had not released him. On 1 January 1781, 1,500 soldiers from the Pennsylvania Line, the 11 regiments under General Anthony Wayne's command, protested that their three-year enlistments had expired and complained that they had not been paid.

For a week, the mutiny could have ended violently, but General Anthony Wayne and Congressional President Joseph Reed knew that how they treated these men now – men who had served more than a full enlistment already – would affect their ability to recruit. Since the men brought complaints that officers had tricked or punished soldiers to extend their enlistments, Reed concluded it would be better to meet their demands.

Edward took a $20 bounty, and clothing, and went home.

Apres la Guerre

To simply say that "war changes men" is not enough. How it changes them depends on their character, and on the things that circumstances force them to endure.

Jim Callen had a difficult enough time abiding by the authority of the Pennsylvania Quakers before he went to war and he came home with an even deeper mistrust of government. He never talked to his family about what happened to him when the Virginian regiments marched South, but he complained bitterly and often about the "decisions by committee" in Congress that kept Washington from acquiring needed supplies. He wouldn't speak at all of his experiences after the surrender at Charleston, except to say that General Scott had been betrayed, and all Virginians with him. He would follow Gen. Scott again, fighting with the Kentucky Mounted Volunteers at the Battle of Fallen Timbers near what is now Toledo, Ohio, in 1794.

Edward also had trouble talking about his experiences. While the expedition against the Haudenonsaunee had been framed as justice in response to their attacks, the sight of highly trained soldiers razing a village full of freezing and starving families never sat well in his heart. When he married and looked for land to raise his own family, he wouldn't consider the towns in the Finger Lakes region.

Leopold's change was probably the most dramatic. He began his journey as an aggressor, seeing himself as the civilized warrior sent to bring order to a wilderness. Four years working for Mr. Faesch had convinced him that there was already a new kind of order in this New World, and he wanted to stay there to build his life. Despite the attempts of three armies – German, British, and American – to compel his allegiance during those four years of war, he decided to stay in Morris County as his own man. An American man.

Jim and Edward never met Leopold, despite spending the New Jersey winter of 1778 within 17 miles of each other. Who knows how many of Leopold's cannonballs the other two men saw fired on the British. Who knows how many of Jim's and Edward's defensive engagements kept the British from putting a torch to Leopold's barracks. After the war, they would never know that they made each other's lives possible.

Just as they could never know that the great-great-granddaughter of Leopold's great-great-grandson would marry the great-great-grandson of Jim's great-great-grandson – or that a great-great grandchild of that marriage would write this story in 250 years.

Article shared from https://mightieracorns.com/2025/11/12/lives-and-fortunes-three-revolutionary-war-americans/

SCAN ME

FOOTNOTES

1. *JSTOR: Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society (1901-1930), Vol. 3, No. 5 (MARCH, 1906) pp. 201-252*

2. *Salamida, Joseph C. "The Hessians Are Coming!" Warfare History, April 2007*

Copyright 2026 Tad Callin

ANNE WENDEL

1778–1850

ATTACK! AND FALL

The Bloody Tragedies of Catherine Oxendine - Stories 250

Anne blogs at Grandma's Granny's Family Album https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com This piece was part of Genealogy Matters Storyteller Tuesday Challenge: ERSTWHILE ECHOES

SCAN ME

First Generation

> *"Mrs. Oxendein sitting with her husband one evening in their log cabin, a pot of corn was boiling on the fire, and they were sitting there happy together, playing with their young child (picture of a happy & contented young family) - After his death they put his body on two chairs - with the blood dropping down - then she went to the door & called to the Indians to come & kill her too - but she did not afterward hear as much as a leaf move."*

The wife is Martha, the husband Benjamin, and their young child is Catherine. Martha told this story in Shelburne, Nova Scotia, where she and Catherine fled in 1783.

An example of a 1770s NC cabin. The "Britt Sanders Cabin" Southern Pines, https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/52239/pg52239-images.html

RECORDED TALK

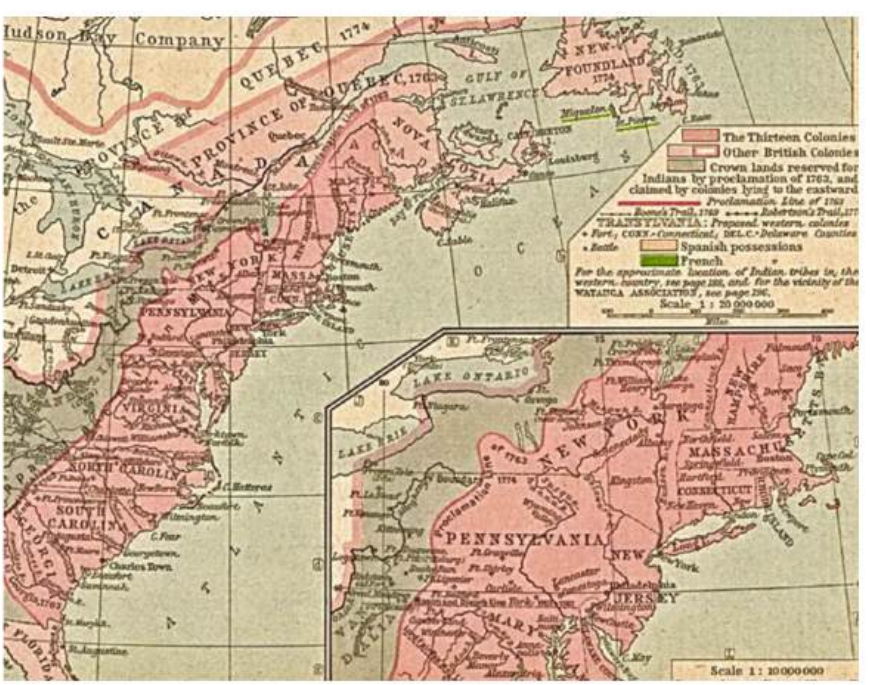
SCAN ME

Why is there a break in the story, no account of the actual murder? Because Martha cannot bring herself to say it, or else her brain has blocked that part out. What is foremost in her mind -- what will never go away -- is the sensory input. The sight of the blood dropping down between two chairs. The sound of her own voice screaming. The silence. And the sight of the woods, not moving, looking exactly the same as it had 5 minutes ago before everything exploded. If you have lived through trauma, maybe you can imagine it...the sudden flip from happiness to horror to unearthly silence, the action without thought, the desire to be dead with him. What can you never bear again because it's a trigger? The smell of corn cooking? The enclosed feeling of a cabin? Being in the woods?

And Catherine will never forget either. But because she's only about three, it won't be a logical memory...it will just be the triggers. The corn smell, the blood, the intense fear, and then the loss of love, of home, of security.
They weren't alone in their grief. There was a war on. Most of the country was traumatized.

But while we can imagine universal feelings, there are many things we don't know. Where and when did the attack occur? Why? Was it an isolated event or part of a battle? What did Martha do next?

Genealogists have a wall they can't get over; my wall is the American Revolution. Seventeen of my ancestors were Loyalists who received



The 13 original colonies. Illustration from History.net (https://historynet.com/the-fight-for-the-14th-colony-nova-scotia)

land grants in Nova Scotia due to their support for the Crown during the Revolutionary War they lost. But which American colony were they from? For Catherine Oxendine, the attack is my first clue.

When I heard the story, I considered where it was likely to happen. In Nova Scotia, I hadn't heard of any hostilities between white settlers and native Mi'kmaq, and I found out that was because of the peace treaties of the 1700s. One of my cousins thought it happened in New York, where the ships for Nova Scotia set sail, but there weren't any Indian wars around New York City by the late 1700s. In the Carolinas, however, Cherokees kept up a resistance against the encroaching white settlers. Martha's second husband, Jacob Glance, fought with the Royal North Carolina Regiment and was named a Tory traitor in Lincoln County, NC. Maybe they knew each other before their arrival in Shelburne?

Oxendine is a very uncommon name, held only by British nobility and North Carolina Indians. Neither seemed likely to me at all, but the evidence kept pointing me to Carolina. Another fact I learned is that Martha was deserving of passage to Nova Scotia on the strength of her father's, John Mortimore's, service in the King's Carolina Rangers. It turns out that both the King's Carolina Rangers and Jacob Glance's Royal North Carolina Regiment were evacuated from Charleston, South Carolina, to Fort St. Augustine in Spanish Florida. From St. Augustine, there was a choice of British colonies to relocate to, but most chose Nova Scotia.

A Loyalist strung up by American Patriots after the Revolution, photo from History of the United States by Charles A. and Mary R. Beard; public domain

Martha and Jacob could have easily met in either place. Jacob must have seemed like a good choice for a second husband. His kindness could ease the grief, and his bravery would protect her. Jacob was from Amsterdam, but he had been a soldier for a number of years in America, and had been wounded in either the eye or the leg or both. He was certainly good with kids, because he had taken in the 15-year-old orphan of his fallen comrade.

I don't know what happened to Martha's father John Mortimore or if he ever made it on the ship, because there is no mention of him in Shelburne. Martha and Jacob married when her daughter Catherine was about 6, and they went on to have 3 more daughters, Elizabeth, Margaret, and Mary Glance. After a devastating fire in Shelburne, they moved to nearby Barrington and Jacob took a job in Sargent's Mill. They lived out long lives there.

Second Generation

Catherine married Michael Madden, an Irishman who fought with the British in the Revolution, in 1794. They may have found they understood each other because of loss; Michael's wife Isabella had just died the year before. Isabella was so fat, she couldn't lean over to the fireplace to light her pipe from the coals. So she kept a servant girl for that task. They had been married about 4 years when Isabella crossed the harbor in a small boat with another woman and some children. The boat capsized and everyone drowned except the old oarsman.

Why was it important for Amos Doane, who wrote down these stories, to record how fat Isabella was? I don't know; maybe it was the cause of the boat capsizing or contributed to her drowning.

Catherine and Michael honored their lost loved ones by naming their first children Isabella and Benjamin. Then there was Margaret after Catherine's sister, then Rebecca, then Michael after his father, and then Catherine after her mother.

But Catherine, having witnessed the bloody death of her own father in her childhood, was not able to keep her children from the same fate. In March 1809, Michael was watching his sons Benjamin and Michael Jr., ages 11 and 5, catching eels, when he fell from a large rock. We don't know how long he lay there or if he was conscious or

could speak, but we can imagine Benjamin trying desperately to stop the bleeding, begging his father to live, while his little brother ran panicked for help. By the time help arrived, Michael was dead.

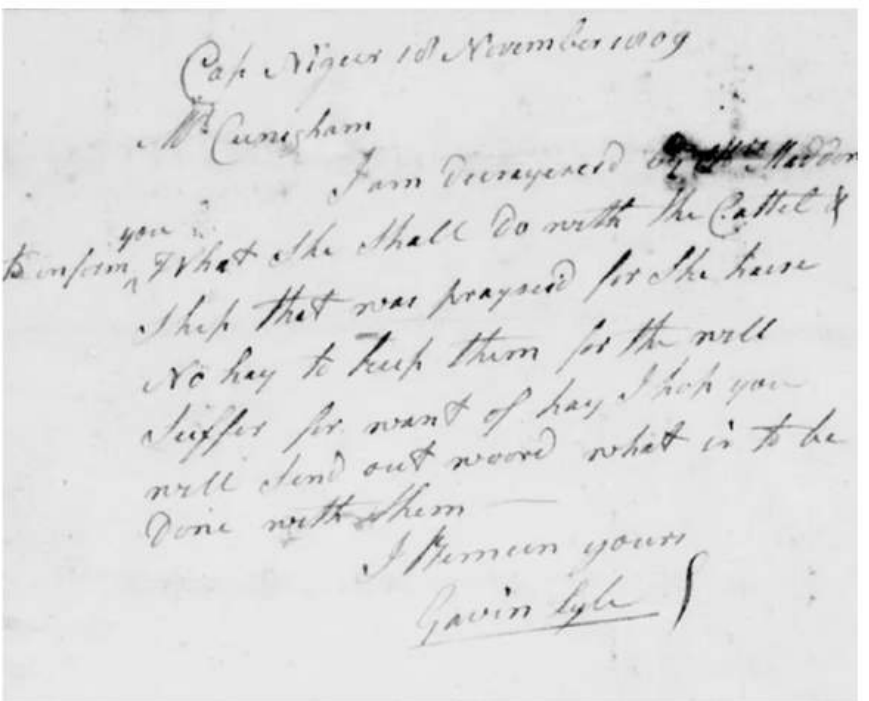
An example of catching an eel, Michael's great-granddaughter and my aunt Jean Robertson Brendel at Newville Lake, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia, 1948, photo in author's collection

Catherine was 3 months pregnant at Michael's death. Maybe she wondered if God had cursed her. Or maybe she thought that God had chosen this double fate for her because she could handle it. Although Martha only had one child to take care of and Catherine had seven, she drew strength from how her mother had dealt with the murder and evacuation years before and launched into widow mode. Martha was there to help her daughter, and the baby born in September was named Martha after her.

Barrington, where they lived, was a wool-weaving town. Every family had their own sheep, and they brought the shorn wool to the main mill to be washed and spun and woven. It was town policy to provide this service to widows for free so they could earn money from their sheep. Surely Catherine and her children benefited from this policy. Michael had 15 sheep to leave to his family.

Barrington town tartan

Widow Madden worked through the tragedy by doing what Michael would have wanted her to. First she gave birth to the child he would never see. Then, illiterate, she signed by her mark to became the executor of his small estate -- besides the sheep, there was a cow named Browny and a 2-year-old steer named Buck. Four days after that, she asked the neighbor who posted bond for the estate, a man who could write, to address a letter from her to the court. How was she supposed to feed the cows and sheep? for she had no hay, it was November, and they would suffer from want of hay. She hoped Judge Mr. Cuningham would send out word what was to be done with the animals.



Cap Nigeur 18 November 1809

Mr Cuningham

I am Decrayeseid by Mr Madden to inform you What She Shall Do with the Cattel & Shep that was prayseid for She haise No hay to keep them for the will Suffer for want of hay I hop you will Send out woord what is to be Done with them

I Remain yours

Gavin Lyle

Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Probate Records, Shelburne County

Third Generation

I don't know what the word was or what Catherine did. The death of a parent shatters a family, and it can never be put back the way it was. Some people, forced to take on more responsibilities, become high achievers, and other people flounder. Catherine did raise her children to become successful adults. She married William Mahaney after 5 years and had 3 more children. The oldest son who may have watched his father die, Benjamin, became a very successful fisherman. Michael Jr., who may have run for help, became a mariner and owned a schooner named Lady of the Forest. The children married and stayed in the community.

Daughters Rebecca and Catherine, who I will call Cassie,* ages 7 and 3 1/2 when their father was killed, may have been affected the most from the fractured family. Maybe Rebecca was a mother figure to Cassie, since their actual mother was busy raising 7 children by herself. They were obviously very close; it even looks like Cassie patterned her life after Rebecca's. They both left Barrington for Churchover, and married very young, at ages 18 and 17, in Shelburne instead of Barrington. Rebecca married James Robertson and Cassie married his brother; they had houses on the same land. Perhaps Cassie left home as a teenager and lived with Rebecca and James.

Fourth Generation

Nowadays, mental health professionals examine how trauma is passed down through generations. My first inkling that something had gone wrong in this family was back when I was a teenager, looking at baptisms in the Archives. Cassie and John Robertson's list of children sounded almost exactly like John's list of siblings, so much so that at first I didn't realize they were two different families. Cassie didn't name any child after her deceased father Michael, or any other Madden. Either John was really controlling, or, more likely I thought, Cassie didn't want to remember her past. Maybe as a 3-year-old she had magically concluded she was doomed to repeat her mother's life since she had the same name.

And that's when I started looking through records for evidence of the Family Oxendine's bloody tragedies.

*"Cassie" and John Robertson had a granddaughter who was named Catherine after her. The granddaughter's nickname was Cassie, shortened to Cass as an adult. To make the difference between the first two Catherines clear, I decided to give the second Catherine the nickname Cassie also. Who knows? It could be true.

REFERENCES

- ***Madden Family Genealogy, Shelburne Genealogical Society***
- ***Anglican Church Records, Shelburne***
- ***Edwin Crowell, History of Barrington Township***
- ***Record of Deaths recorded by Saml. O. Doane, T. Clerk, Barrington***
- *"John Mortimore served in King's Carolina Rangers under Lt. Col. Thomas Brown, evacuated from Charleston"*
- *"Jacob Glance enlisted 24 Jan 1781 in Royal North Carolina Regiment under Capt. John Wormley, served until 1783 when disbanded and evacuated to Charleston South Carolina. named as Tory Traitor in summonses issued under Confiscation Act. "To the Sherriff of Lincoln county you are hereby commanded to take" 33 names on act. Bros stayed in NC. Brought w him Archibald Brannon, 15, son of another Southern Campaign soldier KIA" - researched by Richard Ripley, UELwww.uelac.org/Loyalist-Trails/2013*
-
- *Notes of Amos Doane, Barrington Historical and Genealogical Society - "Jacob Glance - From Amsterdam - Was a soldier in the American Revolution - He came to Philadelphia and joined the Loyalist Army there - He belonged to the garrison - In an engagement with the Indians he was wounded in the eye with an arrow. J. G. after serving in the Revolutionary War came to Shelburne with the Loyalist - and drew land in that Township - He was wounded in battle in the leg. J. G. Married in Shelburne the Widow Martha Oxendein - who also came from New York (?) in the same ship with John Thomas - they moved from shelburne to Cape Negro, and lived for some time there near David Thomas senr Then they came to Barrington and settled at the River. Mr. Glance worked in Mr. Sargents' mill - children Elizabeth m. Obed Christie - Mary m. Wm Watt, Margaret M. Andrew (Ansel or Anson) Nickerson. Jacob Glance died Aug. 28. 1824. - Martha wife of Jacob Glance died Decr. 7. 1819"*

Story of Murder also from Notes of Amos Doane

- *https://www.historynet.com/the-fight-for-the-14th-colony-nova-scotia/*

Article shared from https://grandmasgrannysfamilyalbum.substack.com/p/attack-and-fall

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Anne Wendel

1779–1863

CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE

My Moore Family in America - Part 4

Bill blogs from both his Substack publication at https://BillMooreNY.substack.com and his WeAre Archive. The QR code takes you to his Substack profile which includes both sites.

"Twas the night before Christmas...." I'm sure we all can finish that line. "A Visit from St. Nicholas" was an important part of the Christmas holiday when I was a child. But finding out that Clement Clarke Moore is my 4th cousin, 8 times removed, makes it even more special to me now.

Early life and family

Clement Clarke Moore was born on 15 July 1779, at Chelsea House, his maternal grandparents' estate in Manhattan, New York City. He was the only child of the Right Reverend Benjamin Moore, D.D., and Charity Clarke Moore.1

Clement Clarke Moore, 3/1810 (pastel on grey paper) by Sharples, James (1751-1811); © Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, UK

Clement was born into a privileged life. His father, the Right Reverend Benjamin Moore, was an Assistant Minister at Trinity Church in Manhattan and received the Doctor of Sacred Theology degree from Columbia University shortly before his birth.2 Rev. Moore became the Bishop-Coadjutor of the New York Diocese in 18013 and Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the State of New York later that year.4 A fuller accounting of the life of Bishop Moore was told in Part 3 of this series.

> *An only child, Clement was capably tutored at home by his father until he entered Columbia College, according to his biographer. Samuel White Patterson, he graduated in 1798 "at the head of his class, as his father had, thirty years earlier." In 1801 he earned his MA from Columbia University: he was awarded an LLD in 1829.*

As the child of a clergyman, religion and religious activities would have been central to Clement's life. Although he did not follow his father into ministry, his religious instruction during his youth shaped his future.

Clement married Catherine Elizabeth "Eliza" Taylor, the daughter of the late William Taylor and Elizabeth Van Cortlandt Taylor on 20 November 1813. Clement and Eliza became the parents of nine children.5

Catherine Elizabeth (Mrs. Clement C.) Moore. Illustration from Recollections of Clement C. Moore, author of "A Visit from St. Nicholas" (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1906)

Eliza left behind a wonderful piece of poetry that illustrates the relationship she had with Clement:

> ***Clement C. Moore***
>
> ***MY REASONS FOR LOVING.***
>
> *You ask me why I love him?*
> *I'll tell the reason true:*
> *Because he said so often*
> *With fervour "I love you."*
>
> *I loved him, yes, I loved him*
> *Because he told his flame*
> *With such a skilled variety*
> *And whispered "Je vous aime."*
>
> *Because so sweetly tender*
> *As any swain on Arno,*
> *In crowded streets he'd woo me,*
> *With Petrarch's own "Vi amo."*
>
> *Because whenever coldly*
> *I'd answer him "Ah, no,"*
> *He'd all my coldness banish*
> *By faltering "Te amo."*
>
> *Because when belles surrounded*
> *He'd still address to me*
> *The words of love and learning,*
> *And sigh "Philea se."*
>
> *Because his English, French,*
> *Italian, Latin, Greek,*
> *He crowned with noble Hebrew*
> *And dulcet "Ahobotick."6*

Sadly, Eliza died on 30 April 1830 at age 35. Their daughter, Charity Elizabeth Moore, died on 12 December of the same year.

Chelsea

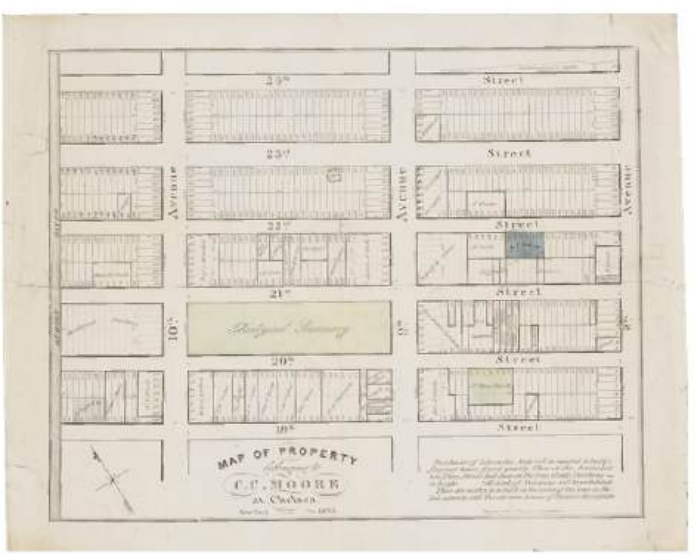
When Clement's mother died in 1838, she left him the Clarke family estate in Manhattan called Chelsea. The name is instantly recognizable by anyone who has visited or lived in New York City as the part of the city North of the West Village and South of Midtown and Hell's Kitchen. From Colonial times into the 1800s, it was largely farmland and orchards owned by the Clarke family.

Moore himself was born in 1799 on a Manhattan farm established by his grandfather, Major Thomas Clarke, who named his property Chelsea in honor of a famous veterans' hospital in London. Clarke's daughter, Charity, married Benjamin Moore, who became bishop of the Episcopal church in New York. Clement Moore inherited the Chelsea estate from his grandfather, which spanned what today would be roughly from 19th to 24th streets between Eighth and 10th avenues — when he was just 14 years old.

Two years earlier, the city had created a map — the Commissioners' Plan of 1811 — that both created the city's rectangular street grid and established the norm of 25-by-100-foot house lots.

Young Clement wasn't happy with that denser future. In 1818, when he was 19 years old, he published an anonymous pamphlet titled "A Plain Statement, Addressed to the Proprietors of Real Estate, in the City and County of New-York," calling the street plan a "source of stress and vexation." He also predicted laying out the grid would be "expensive" and "obnoxious" and — when it was all over — the commissioners would have destroyed New York.

To keep the city from riding roughshod over his farm, he took the central orchard and donated it to the Episcopal Church to build the General Theological Seminary, established in 1817. But that still left much of Moore's land ripe for development. As the 1820s progressed and New Yorkers began moving uptown, Moore began to have second thoughts about the evils of real estate. Instead of visions of sugar plums, he saw dollar signs.7



Clement C. Moore's property map, New York Historical Society

Beginning about 1820, Clement began making a series of donations of property that helped change his farmland into one of Manhattan's premier residential and commercial neighborhoods. "In 1820, he co-founded and served as senior warden of closer-by St.-Luke-in-the-Field in Greenwich Village, the builder of which, James Wells, was to become his partner in developing Chelsea. A musician since childhood, he played the organ at St. Luke and was on the organizing committee for a couple of Handel and Haydn oratorios downtown."8

In 1827, he donated 66 tracts of land that were the former apple orchard to the New York Episcopal Diocese to establish the General Theological Seminary. In 1837, he donated the land to build St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Chelsea at 20th Street and 9th Avenue. He served as a professor at the seminary for many years afterward.9

"A *Visit from St. Nicholas*"

In December 1823, the Troy Sentinel newspaper in upstate, Troy, New York, published an anonymous poem called "A Visit from St. Nicholas." The poem quickly gained popularity and spread across the nation. It wasn't until 1844 that Clement Clarke Moore claimed authorship of the poem when he included it in Poems, a collection of his poetry. He said that he had written the poem to read to his children on Christmas Eve in 1822.10

In the years since then, family members of Major Henry Livingston, Jr., and some academics have claimed that Major Livingston had written the poem. He, like Clement Moore, had written other poems for his children, but he did not claim authorship of the poem during his lifetime, and friends could not recall that he had ever mentioned writing it.11

Interestingly, he is credited with having written another Christmas poem in 1821. While not as light and cheerful as "A Visit from St. Nicholas," it does provide some evidence pointing toward his authorship.

> **Old Santeclaus**
>
> ***Clement Clarke Moore***
>
> *Old Santeclaus with much delight*
> *His reindeer drives this frosty night,*
> *O'er chimney-tops, and tracks of snow,*
> *To bring his yearly gifts to you.*
>
> *The steady friend of virtuous youth,*
> *The friend of duty, and of truth,*
> *Each Christmas eve he joys to come*
> *Where love and peace have made their home.*
>
> *Through many houses he has been,*
> *And various beds and stockings seen;*
> *Some, white as snow, and neatly mended,*
> *Others, that seemed for pigs intended.*
>
> *Where e'er I found good girls or boys,*
> *That hated quarrels, strife and noise,*

I left an apple, or a tart,
Or wooden gun, or painted cart.

To some I gave a pretty doll,
To some a peg-top, or a ball;
No crackers, cannons, squibs, or rockets,
To blow their eyes up, or their pockets.

No drums to stun their Mother's ear,
Nor swords to make their sisters fear;
But pretty books to store their mind
With knowledge of each various kind.

But where I found the children naughty,
In manners rude, in temper haughty,
Thankless to parents, liars, swearers,
Boxers, or cheats, or base tale-bearers,

I left a long, black, birchen rod,
Such as the dread command of God
Directs a Parent's hand to use
When virtue's path his sons refuse.

(This poem is in the public domain.)

I doubt that authorship of "A Visit from St. Nicholas" is something that will ever be conclusively decided. Written documentation is lacking on both sides of the controversy. For my part, the book I had as a child said it was written by Clement Clarke Moore. That's the one I'll believe unless someone can provide positive proof otherwise.

Later Life and Retirement

When Clement retired from his position as a professor at General Theological Seminary in 1860, he began spending most of his time at his 25-room Victorian summer home in Newport, Rhode Island. He died in Newport on 10 July 1863. He was first buried in the graveyard adjacent to St. Luke-in-the-Field but was moved to the Trinity Church Cemetery in Uptown Manhattan when the graveyard at St. Luke was redeveloped in 1891. Clement's funeral was held in Trinity Church where his father preached for many years.

Since 1911, a unique Christmas tradition has been observed at Moore's grave. Initiated by Vicar Milo Hudson Gates, the ceremony involves children gathering around Moore's gravestone to sing Christmas carols and place wreaths. This tradition, which originally involved children carrying lanterns and torches, continues into modern times, connecting generations of New Yorkers to Moore's literary legacy.12

Grave marker for Clement Clarke Moore, Catherine Elizabeth Moore, Charity Elizabeth Moore, and Clement Moore Jr. in the Trinity Church Cemetery in Upper Manhattan, New York City.

Finding that Clement Clarke Moore is one of my ancestors was a delightful shock. We had joked in our family about the possibility, but never really considered that it could be true. But writing a children's Christmas poem is not why he should be remembered. His contributions to building important areas of New York City should be celebrated. The General Theological Seminary is a wonderful respite in the busy city I occasionally visited to think and escape. I will thank him for it on my next visit.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Charles H. Weygant, The Sacketts of America, their ancestors and descendants, 1630-1907, (Newburgh, New York, 1907), 125, imaged by Internet Archive, Library of Congress (https://archive.org/details/sackettsofameric02weyg/page/n127/mode/2up).*

2. *Herman Griswold Batterson, A sketch-book of the American episcopate, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1878), 66, imaged by Google (https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nnc1.cr59971983&seq=76).*

3. *Ibid., 66-67.*

4. *Weyant, The Sacketts of America, 125.*

5. *William Ogden Wheeler, The Ogden Family, Elizabethtown Branch, (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott, 1898), 196, imaged by Google, (https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Ogden_Family_in_America_Elizabethtow/ITPH48yu-b4C?hl).*

6. *Mary Moore Sherman, transcriber, Recollections of Clement C. Moore, (New York, Knickerbocker Press, 1906), image William and Mary Digital Archive (https://melvilliana.blogspot.com/2017/12/clement-c-moore-my-reasons-for-loving.html).*

7. *James Nevius, "How 'Night Before Christmas' creator also spawned NYC's Chelsea," New York Post, 18 December 2019, (https://nypost.com/2019/12/18/how-night-before-christmas-creator-also-spawned-nycs-chelsea/).*

8. *Justin Fox, "A Gift for America's Christmas Poet: Rehabilitation," Bloomberg Opinion, 22 December 2021, (https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-12-22/-night-before-christmas-author-clement-c-moore-s-shot-at-rehabilitation).*

9. *General Theological Seminary, "History," (https://www.gts.edu/our-history), accessed 26 April 2025.*

10. *"Clement Clarke Moore, 1779-1863," Poetry Foundation, website (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/clement-clarke-moore), accessed 26 April 2025.*

11. *Ibid.*

12. *"'Twas The Night: A New York Christmas tradition in an uptown cemetery," The Bowery Boys, 14 December 2022, (https://www.boweryboyshistory.com/2022/12/the-new-york-christmas-tradition-in-an-uptown-cemetery.html#google_vignette).*

Article shared from https://billmooreny.substack.com/p/my-moore-family-in-america-part-4

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Bill Moore

HELENE MCCLANAHAN

1780

BIRD'S INVASION OF KENTUCKY

& the attack on Hinkson's settlement

Helene blogs at Letters from Labelle
https://lettersfromlabelle.substack.com

SCAN ME

If you're extremely lucky in your research travels as a family historian, you may stumble upon an ancestor who's story is both so fantastic and so well documented that you just can't put it down! That's how I felt, when I stumbled across the story of my 5x great-grandfather, John Hinkson (1729-1789). Before researching him, I had no idea that he had been a militia captain during the American Revolution or an extremely influential pioneer in Kentucky's founding. But as I begun to dive into historical archives, I uncovered such an extraordinary life story that my simple desire to write and share a short entry about him on my Substack site has turned into a full length book – which I hope to publish this fall.

In celebrating American's 250 birthday through this commemorative magazine, I have selected a chapter about John Hinkson's experience of being attacked and captured by the British in June 1780. This is a story I think few readers will have ever heard anything about, as it is an American Revolution story that is not covered in any of the traditional history books. The attack was known as Captain Henry Bird's invasion of Kentucky in 1780.

When John Hinkson and his three traveling companions arrived at their former Kentucky settlement in June 1780, they had no idea that the British were leading a large-scale military offensive directly their way.

Along the East Coast, the Revolution had grown into a weary stalemate and the British Crown had expressed frustration with the lack of progress. They felt they needed some type of definitive victory to boost morale, so leadership looked to Detroit to plan a new western campaign that was outside of the Continental Army's reach, in the hopes that the frontier could be reestablished as the Crown's dominion.

Bird's Invasion of Kentucky

Although the governor of Detroit, Henry Hamilton, had surrendered the frontier to George Rogers Clark the year before, the British remained undeterred. To regain control, they attempted to mastermind a four-pronged campaign in 1780 aimed at crushing the frontier once and for all. This plan involved a massive coordinated offensive that would stretch from the source of the Mississippi River to the Gulf Coast. Central to the plan was an attack on the fortifications at the Falls of the Ohio, the strategic heart of Clark's military operations.

Captain Henry Bird was put in charge of leading the largest prong of the offensive aimed at Clark. His contingent of soldiers would be heavily comprised of nearly 1,000 braves from the Shawnee, Wyandot, and the tribes of the Great Lakes (Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi).

Tribal leaders aligned with Loyalists had been frustrated by the lack of British progress in quelling settlements. They realized that any effort to halt encroachment on their ancestral hunting grounds was fruitless without the use of British cannons to level forts and settler fortifications. So, they made a pact with British leadership: if Detroit agreed to supply heavy artillery to the mission, tribal leadership would supply the warriors, nearly one thousand strong.

In exchange for supplying the bulk of the fighting manpower for the campaign, the warriors also received plundering rights. The British would take responsibility for any prisoners. After that, all other "spoils of war" would be fair game for division among the tribes.

With such a large contingent of committed warriors, the British soldier complement could be lighter. Bird's army only consisted of about 60 regular soldiers and six dozen militia Loyalists. Detroit would make good on its heavy artillery promise by providing three- and six-pounder cannons (the weight of the cannonballs) for the effort. It would be the first time that cannons were ever transported deep into the wilderness and used against Kentucky settlements.

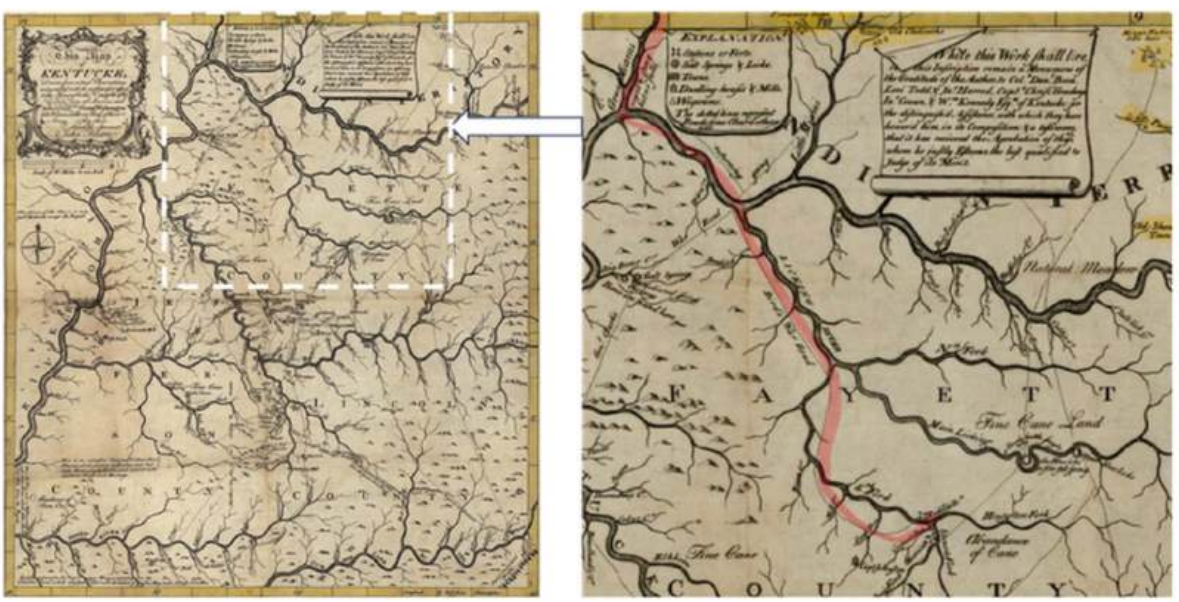
When Bird left Detroit in April 1780, he had approximately 150 Loyalists and 100 warriors in his contingent. As the campaign traversed down the Maumee and Miami rivers and across the Ohio

Find all the chapters of his incredible story and journey at https://lettersfromlabelle.substack.com/t/jhinkson

Valley, the number of committed warriors swelled significantly. By the time the invasion forces reached the shore of the Ohio River directly opposite the mouth of the Licking River (present-day Cincinnati), the force of Indian fighters had approached one thousand.

In charting Bird's path southward from Detroit to the Falls of Ohio, the expedition experienced constant logistical challenges in moving the heavy artillery across flooded and muddy routes. The British field cannons, each weighing between 1,200 and 1,500 pounds, proved exceptionally difficult to transport over land. When river transportation was no longer an option, corduroy roads2 had to be cut and placed across the soft ground in order to make even minimal progress.

This historic Filson map of "Kentucke" includes the "War Road" that Bird's invasion took from the Ohio Valley down the Licking River and then inland to "Riddles Station."



Bird's War Road is found on this early 1783 map made by John Filson.

After experiencing weeks of countless setbacks, delays, and growing tribal tensions, Bird decided that a surprise attack on the Falls was unfeasible without alerting Clark and his forces. As a result, Bird agreed to alter the invasion plans in an effort to appease tribal leaders and avoid a complete campaign catastrophe. Rather than proceeding on the course to strike the Falls fortifications, the large "war party" set its sights on attacking several smaller settler stations in Bluegrass country.

What happened next is a story unlike any other in Revolutionary War history. Field cannons were used against Kentucky frontier settlements that were largely inhabited by homesteaders, women, and children.

The attack on Ruddle's Station (Hinkson's Station)

On the morning of June 24, 1780, the 250 or so inhabitants of Ruddle's Station were quietly waking up to begin a new day.

Just a few days before, John Hinkson, along with three men from his company, had arrived to make arrangements for the return of their families to their former settlement. Thanks to the efforts of Isaac Ruddle and his men, the fifteen log structures that Hinkson's party had built and left behind in the summer of 1776 had been added to. There was now a formidable fortified stockade on the banks of the Licking River that was capable of protecting more than 50 families.

Isaac Ruddle, with his group of approximately 40 families, had moved to the settlement a year before. They had quickly picked up where Hinkson's party left off, making repairs to one of the abandoned structures before expanding the footprint of the blockhouse into a large stockade. The stockade walls encased a large interior that provided enough space to comfortably house approximately 250 people. As the settlers set about planting crops and making other improvements, they had a safe haven to retreat to in the case that any wandering warriors came their way.

The inhabitants of Ruddle's Station (the new name for Hinkson's settlement that reflected the stockade's improvements) had experienced several small Indian attacks since their relocation from western Virginia. But, it was nothing like the assault they would face when Capt. Henry Bird and British-allied warriors descended upon their small outpost..

June 24th had been a normal morning until the sound of gunfire rang out. The settlers quickly learned that they were under attack. Since Indian activity had been reported in the area, most of the settlers had been staying within the walls of the fort at night. Experience had shown that raids were more likely from dusk to dawn, when the cover of darkness was deepest.

Upon the initial exchange of gunfire, all fighting-age men quickly grabbed their weapons and positioned themselves at a post. For the next several hours, they exchanged fire with the Indians.

Outside the fort British commander Captain Henry Bird was fuming. The Indians had ignored his command to not open fire until the cannons had arrived. Although he was supposedly in command of the invasion, it had been clear from the start that the council of chiefs was beholden to no one. Bird and the British were merely viewed as necessary allies with "big guns." They had little effect in restraining the warriors' excitement or curbing the chaotic reality that was quickly unfolding before them.

Bird had anticipated that there might be issues, which is why he had engaged both Captain Alexander McKee and Simon Girty as intermediaries. Both men were well-respected frontier scouts who had spent years living among the tribes. They commanded immense influence within the chiefs' council and knew the art of tribal diplomacy well. McKee was especially an asset to Bird, as he had a Shawnee wife and spoke several indigenous languages fluently. But regardless of McKee's and Girty's influence with tribal leaders, they had been unsuccessful in curbing the warriors' desire to strike first.

Captain Bird had wanted to strategically position the British cannons before any gunfire was exchanged. Since the settlement was largely populated by women and children, he had hoped for a peaceful surrender without too much bloodshed. Obviously, the chiefs paid little attention to Bird's commands. But, after about two hours of uneventful powder exchange, they were persuaded to pull back from their gunfire so that the British cannons could be moved into position.

From historical accounts, the three-pounder was loaded first, and two rounds were let loose at the stockade walls. The cannon's blast created a thunderous sound, the likes of which had never been heard in the Kentucky wilderness. It was the first time that an artillery cannon had ever been fired in the Kentucky frontier. And although the smaller cannonballs did some minor damage to the exterior walls, the impact to the fort's inhabitants was profound, shattering all sense of security.

Within the fort's solid log walls, the settlers' terror grew as the forty or so fighting men within the fort began to realize that they were significantly outgunned. There was no way that they could counterattack against three-pound flying projectiles. And, there was much more at stake than just the lives of the fighting men. The fort's compound held the future of their innocent families.

A Decision to Surrender

While the three-pounder did damage the exterior walls, it did not result in the destruction that the British and the warriors had hoped. While Bird's men maneuvered their larger six-pound cannon into place, Isaac Ruddle, John Hinkson, and the other militia leaders huddled inside the fort to decide on their next step—should they continue to fight or surrender?

Hinkson was one of the strongest voices advocating that the men should continue to fight. But it was easier for him to take this hardline position. He didn't have any family members present who were at risk. They were all safely back at the Falls.

Ruddle, on the other hand, opposed Hinkson's stance. He felt strongly that a conditional surrender was the only way to save the women and children's lives. Without a surrender, he feared that the fort would be overtaken by the overzealous warriors, who would slaughter everyone inside. He believed that, with a surrender, the British would honor a "code of civility" and protect the innocent from harm. When the six-pounder was finally moved into position, Ruddle made the decision to raise the white flag.

This account from Daniel Trabue's narrative, found in the Draper Manuscript collection, provides more detail about the men's discussion and the terms of capitulation that were finally agreed upon.

> *"Capt. Ruddle insisted it would be best to capitulate. Capt. Hinkston and James Trabue insisted to defend the fort. At length Capt. Ruddle got a majority on his side and petitioned Col. Byrd to capitula[te]. The flag was sent back and forward several times before they agreed and the articles was signed and agreed to. James Trabue was the man that did wright in behalf of Ruddle and the people in the fort. The terms of capitulation was that Col. Byrd and his white soldiers should protect the people that was in the fort and march them to Detroit as prisoners, and that the Indians should have nothing to do with them, that the peoples clothing and papers should be secure to themselves with some little exceptions."*
>
> *Daniel Trabue narrative, Draper Manuscript collection, 57J:51-63*

It's disputable whether the settlers raised the white flag first or Bird dispatched his demands for surrender once the six-pounder was in place.

The larger cannon was never discharged. Apparently, the sight of its massive, six-foot barrel was enough to convince the fort's inhabitants that continuing the battle was futile. As Hinkson would later report in his published account of the attack, the cannon's previous discharge had "convinced the besieged of their inability to hold out." With a surrender, they were at Captain Bird's mercy. With their families' lives at stake, they hoped and prayed the British commander could be trusted.

These notes from Lyman Draper's interview with Ohio Governor Jeremiah Morrow on July 22, 1843, provide some further insight into the negotiated terms of surrender. Morrow had heard the story of the fort's capitulation countless times from his close friend Isaac Ruddle. These are the notes that Draper captured:

> *"Seeing the folly of attempting to maintain so unequal a contest, when convinced so effectually of the presence of cannon - raised the white flag, and entered into written terms of capitulation with Bird. The women and children were to be protected and taken to the nearest station and there safely delivered. The men were to be prisoners, with the privilege of taking each his gun, and a pack of such articles as they pleased, and this unexamined - and the fort then delivered up to Bird and the Indians."*
>
> *Gov. Jeremiah Morrow: July 22, 1843, Draper Manuscript Collection 8CC23F*

Although it's unlikely that Bird would have agreed to any surrender that granted his captives "the privilege of taking each his gun," Morrow's comments that the women and children "be protected and taken to the nearest station and there safely delivered" are more believable. This would have been consistent with standard "codes of conduct" practiced by the British during the Revolution. British officers prided themselves on adhering to European customs of warfare, which considered the protection of non-combatants a matter of professional honor. This adherence to this code included Captain Bird, even if he found himself lacking the power to enforce it.

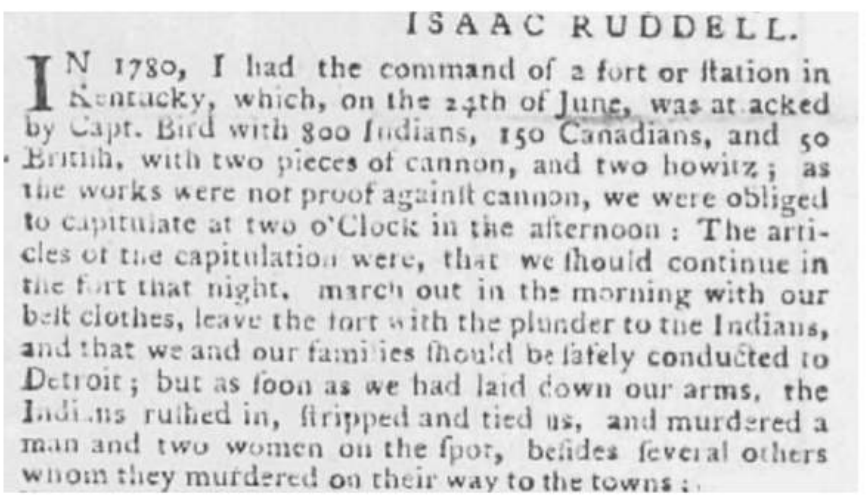
To negotiate the terms of capitulation, Bird relied on Captain Alexander McKee and Simon Girty. Both men were well known to Hinkson and Ruddle, since all four had served together as officers or scouts just six years prior in Lord Dunmore's War.

This account, recorded by Lyman Draper in his interview with Girty's daughter, Sarah Girty Munger, provides insight into the negotiations that took place:

> *"Bird's Expedition, 1780. Girty was on Bird's expedition in summer, 1780, against Kentucky got to a fort, [Martin's or Ruddle's Stations], and Girty was the flag bearer, white flag and when he went in, he said hundreds of rifles were pointed at him; He told them if they did not surrender, they would be all killed, as the Indians were so angry, he could not save them. They surrendered, Girty said he had hard work afterwards to save them from the Indians."*
>
> *Draper's interview with Sarah (Girty) Munger, Draper Manuscript Collection 20S:200*

According to Captain Ruddle, the men came to an agreement that included allowing the families to stay together one last night within the fort's walls. The physical surrender was to take place the next morning in an orderly fashion that would ensure a peaceful transition and the safe passage of the settlers into British protection. They understood that they were to be prisoners of the British and would be escorted to Detroit.

Ruddle's version of the attack and the terms of surrender would be published three years later, when he and his family were released as part of a prisoner exchange. It was published on the front page of the Virginia Gazette on May 31, 1783. Here is an excerpt from the larger narrative that summarizes the events surrounding the attack and surrender:



ISAAC RUDDELL.

IN 1780, I had the command of a fort or ſtation in Kentucky, which, on the 24th of June, was attacked by Capt. Bird with 800 Indians, 150 Canadians, and 50 Britiſh, with two pieces of cannon, and two howitz; as the works were not proof againſt cannon, we were obliged to capitulate at two o'Clock in the afternoon: The articles of the capitulation were, that we ſhould continue in the fort that night, march out in the morning with our beſt clothes, leave the fort with the plunder to the Indians, and that we and our families ſhould be ſafely conducted to Detroit; but as ſoon as we had laid down our arms, the Indians ruſhed in, ſtripped and tied us, and murdered a man and two women on the ſpot, beſides ſeveral others whom they murdered on their way to the towns:

Excerpt from Captain Isaac Ruddle's statement on the events at Ruddle's Station in June 1780. Virginia Gazette, May 31, 1783.

A *Surrender Shattered*

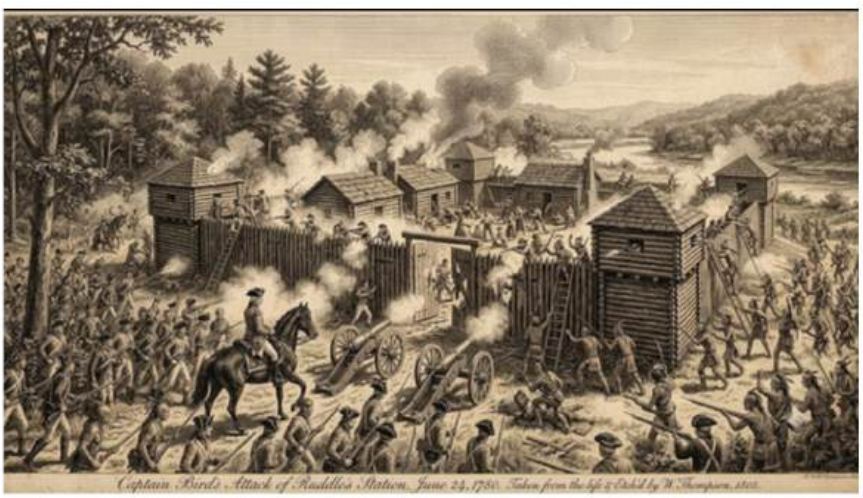
It's well-documented among the historical accounts that complete chaos and unfettered violence erupted as soon as the fort's doors were opened. Hundreds of warriors flooded the courtyard before Bird and his men could complete the prisoner transfer. There was nothing

"peaceful" about the handover. In a matter of seconds, unarmed settlers - consisting mostly of women and children - were subjected to violence and horrors that defied every standard of civilized warfare.

Families were attacked and torn apart as warriors fought for the right to their own personal captives. Infants and children were torn from their mothers' arms. Those who resisted were beaten. As the air filled with the deafening sound of terrorized screams, warrior battle cries, and the heavy thud of clubs hitting flesh, the intended orderly surrender quickly disintegrated into a desperate scramble for survival. Grossly outnumbered by the warriors, Bird and his guards were helpless to curb the violent onslaught.

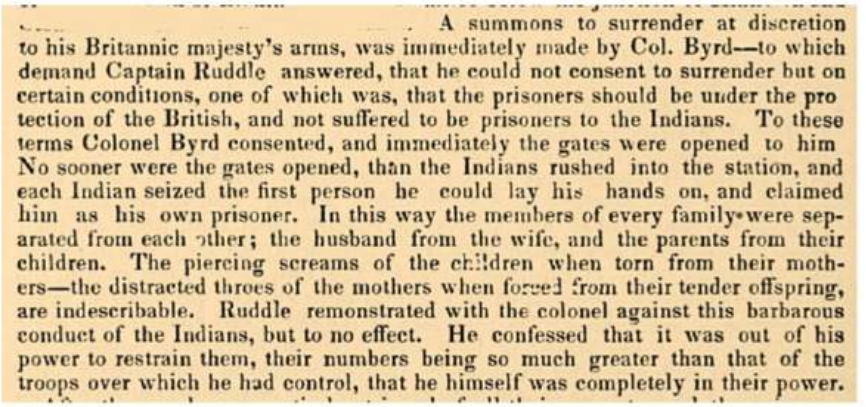
When there weren't enough captives for each warrior to claim, they fought among themselves and proceeded to strip settlers of their clothing and possessions. If they were unable to commandeer a personal prisoner, then a prized jacket, blanket, or bonnet would have to do. No scrap of fabric or keepsake escaped the frenzy. Everything appeared as fair game to the warriors' "plundering rights." Within minutes, the settlers were not only stripped of all their worldly belongings, but they were also stripped of their families and their dignity.

In the frenzy there were some casualties. But, the actual number beyond a few recorded deaths is unknown. The warriors rushed out with their commandeered captives so quickly that separated families didn't know if their loved ones had been killed or taken off as prisoners. For many, it would be over a decade before they escaped and were reunited with other family members who survived.



An AI painting depiction of the attack on Ruddle's Station (Google Gemini AI)

This account found in Collin's Historical Sketches of Kentucky (pub. 1878), which shortens the time between negotiations and the rushing of the gates, provides a chilling glimpse of the terrifying violence that families endured at the hands of their captors.

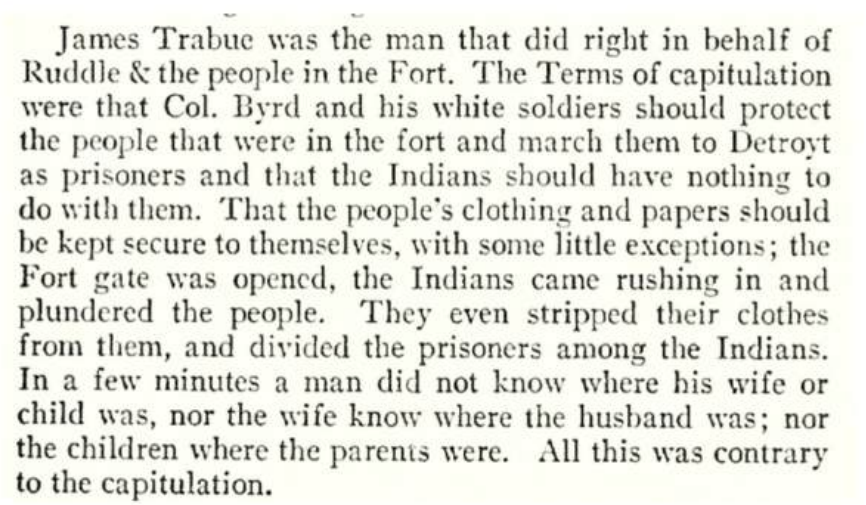


A summons to surrender at discretion to his Britannic majesty's arms, was immediately made by Col. Byrd—to which demand Captain Ruddle answered, that he could not consent to surrender but on certain conditions, one of which was, that the prisoners should be under the protection of the British, and not suffered to be prisoners to the Indians. To these terms Colonel Byrd consented, and immediately the gates were opened to him No sooner were the gates opened, than the Indians rushed into the station, and each Indian seized the first person he could lay his hands on, and claimed him as his own prisoner. In this way the members of every family were separated from each other; the husband from the wife, and the parents from their children. The piercing screams of the children when torn from their mothers—the distracted throes of the mothers when forced from their tender offspring, are indescribable. Ruddle remonstrated with the colonel against this barbarous conduct of the Indians, but to no effect. He confessed that it was out of his power to restrain them, their numbers being so much greater than that of the troops over which he had control, that he himself was completely in their power.

The account of the surrender of Ruddle's Station found in Collin's Historical Sketches of Kentucky, pg. 328 (pub. 1878)

Daniel Trabue described the mayhem that his brother, James Trabue, experienced in his autobiography, penned in 1827. Years later, his account would be published for a larger audience as The Journal of Col. Daniel Trabue in a collection titled Colonial Men and Times (pub. 1915), edited by Lillie Du Puy Van Culin Harper.

Here's the excerpt from the autobiography describing the events as the station's gates were opened. James Trabue was apparently the settler who penned the terms of surrender, as stated in the opening sentence below:



James Trabue was the man that did right in behalf of Ruddle & the people in the Fort. The Terms of capitulation were that Col. Byrd and his white soldiers should protect the people that were in the fort and march them to Detroyt as prisoners and that the Indians should have nothing to do with them. That the people's clothing and papers should be kept secure to themselves, with some little exceptions; the Fort gate was opened, the Indians came rushing in and plundered the people. They even stripped their clothes from them, and divided the prisoners among the Indians. In a few minutes a man did not know where his wife or child was, nor the wife know where the husband was; nor the children where the parents were. All this was contrary to the capitulation.

Excerpt from Colonial Men and Times: The Journal of Col. Daniel Trabue (published. 1915) pg. 62

Captain Bird had anticipated there might be some trouble with the Indians over the terms of capitulation, but it was far worse than he had ever imagined. The night before he had instructed Capt. McGee to arrange a council with tribal leaders so they could walk through

the "peaceful transfer protocols." The Indians were to wait until all prisoners were escorted from the fort before it was turned over to them to plunder and gather up their spoils. Bird also stipulated that no livestock be killed or harmed, to which tribal leaders agreed. This would be needed to feed the prisoners on the journey back north.
But as Bird would write in his July 1, 1780 report to British Major A. S. De Peyster, the Indians showed little respect for his authority:

> *"The Indians gave in Council the cattle for food for our people & the prisoner and were not to enter till the next day. But whilst Capt. McKee and myself were in the Fort settling these matters with the poor people, they rush'd in, tore the poor children from their mothers breasts, killed a wounded man and every one of the cattle, leaving the whole to stink."*
>
> *Letter from Capt. Henry Bird to Major A.S.D. Peyster, July 1, 1780*

Other accounts of that day can be found in the pension affidavit of James Flack, a member of the Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, militia who was one of the few volunteer militiamen serving under Ruddle at the time. Interestingly, Flack had previously served under John Hinkson at Fort Palmer in 1777. (See his pension affidavit in Chapter 5.) Clearly, there was a strong connection between these men.

Here is an excerpt from Flack's deposition that provides some further detail on the small garrison that was guarding the frontier fort:

> *"In the month of May in the year 1780 having gone to Kentucky he entered as a Volunteer under Captain George Ruddle who commanded a Small Fort Called Licking Station situate on Licking River in Kentucky the Fort was about forty miles from Limestone. The Garrison consisted of about forty men and boys. On the 24th of June 1780 before sunrise we were attacked by a large force of British and Indians amounting as this declarant was afterwards informed by one of the enemy's artillery men to two hundred and fifty British and eight hundred and fifty Indians. The attack & defense was continued until about two hours before night. The enemy then brought forward a piece of cannon, which cut our picketing and Compelled us to surrender declarant lost a horse and two rifles, one of the rifles had belonged to declarants brother who was shot by the Indians while standing sentry at the Fort two days before the action. By our articles of capitulation we were to be retained by the British as prisoners of war, but no sooner had we surrendered than we were all delivered to the Indians with the exception of two individuals, Captain John Hinkson and Enos McDonald. The Indians bound this declarant and Marched him to where Cincinnati now stands and from thence to beyond Detroit. The Indians then brought declarant to Detroit and delivered him up to the British."*

In Flack's account, he notes that the size of the "garrison consisted of about forty men and boys." With such a small force of fighting men to defend nearly 200 women and children, it's easy to understand why Captain Ruddle insisted on the surrender. They were woefully outnumbered against a force estimated at "*two hundred and fifty British and eight hundred and fifty Indians.*"

It's also interesting to note that according to Flack, all the station's captives were delivered to the warriors "with the exception of... John Hinkson and Enos McDonald." One can assume this may have occurred through Simon Girty's influence. As noted in earlier chapters, Hinkson and Girty had a lengthy relationship as both friends and adversaries. The reason for Enos McDonald's transfer to British care is unknown. Enos had been a colleague of Hinkson's in Westmoreland County, so perhaps that was the connection.

According to other historical accounts, some warriors did transfer their prisoners to the British in the days after the mayhem died down. But, this occurred more often than not through payment and bargaining. The warriors weren't willing to give up their captives as easily as their tribal leaders had agreed to, but they were willing to sell them back for a price. It is estimated that fewer than half the settlers whisked away that violent day (approximately 150) were never returned to Bird's care. Dozens of women, teenagers, and young children were taken and assimilated into Indian tribes as either enslaved labor or adoptees.

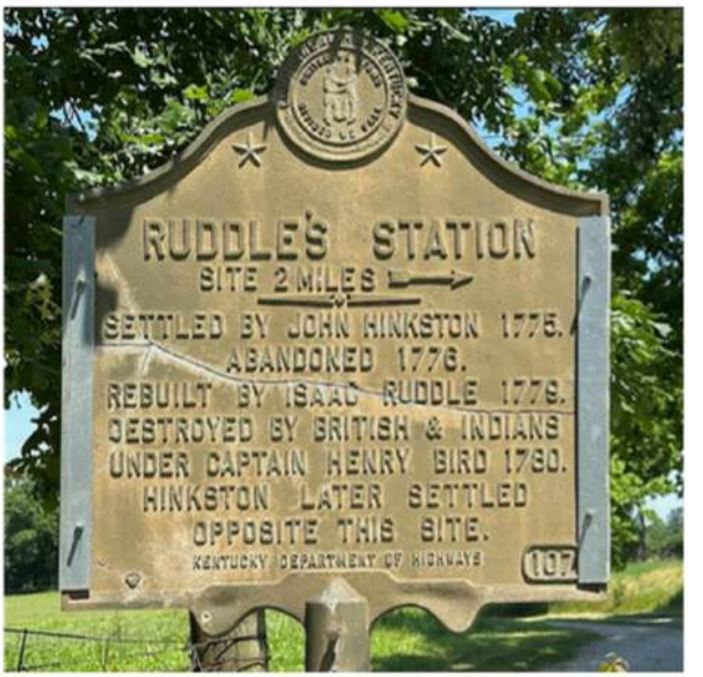
Additionally, the warriors defied Bird's insistence that the livestock be preserved. In their frenzy, they slaughtered all the animals, leaving no stores or supplies for Bird to rely on to feed the prisoners on their long journey to Detroit.

In their final act, the warriors burned Ruddle's Station to the ground. Bird's planned invasion had done little to achieve the British goal of attacking patriot fortifications at the Falls of the Ohio. Instead, it had only succeeded in terrorizing and capturing 250 settlers - mostly farmers, women, and children - while defying almost every rule of civilized warfare and human decency.

Had this event occurred east of the Allegheny and Appalachian mountains, it would have dominated the press and been recorded in the history books as one of the Revolution's most egregious war crimes. But, as with most of the fighting and conflict that occurred on the frontier, the horrific events of June 24–28, 1780, have largely been treated as a quiet footnote. This was viewed perhaps as a tragedy deemed "too western" to be part of the central story of America's fight for independence.

These two historical markers are among the few official artifacts that mark the story of this tragic event:

BIRD'S WAR ROAD
JUNE, 1780
Acting under orders from British commandant at Detroit, Capt. Henry Bird landed near here with 200 Canadian rangers and 600 Indians - Shawnees, Ottawas, Hurons, Mingoes, Chippewas, Delawares, and 'Taways - to attack the frontier forts of Ky. News of George Rogers Clark's approach caused their hasty retreat with 400 captives from Ky. forts.



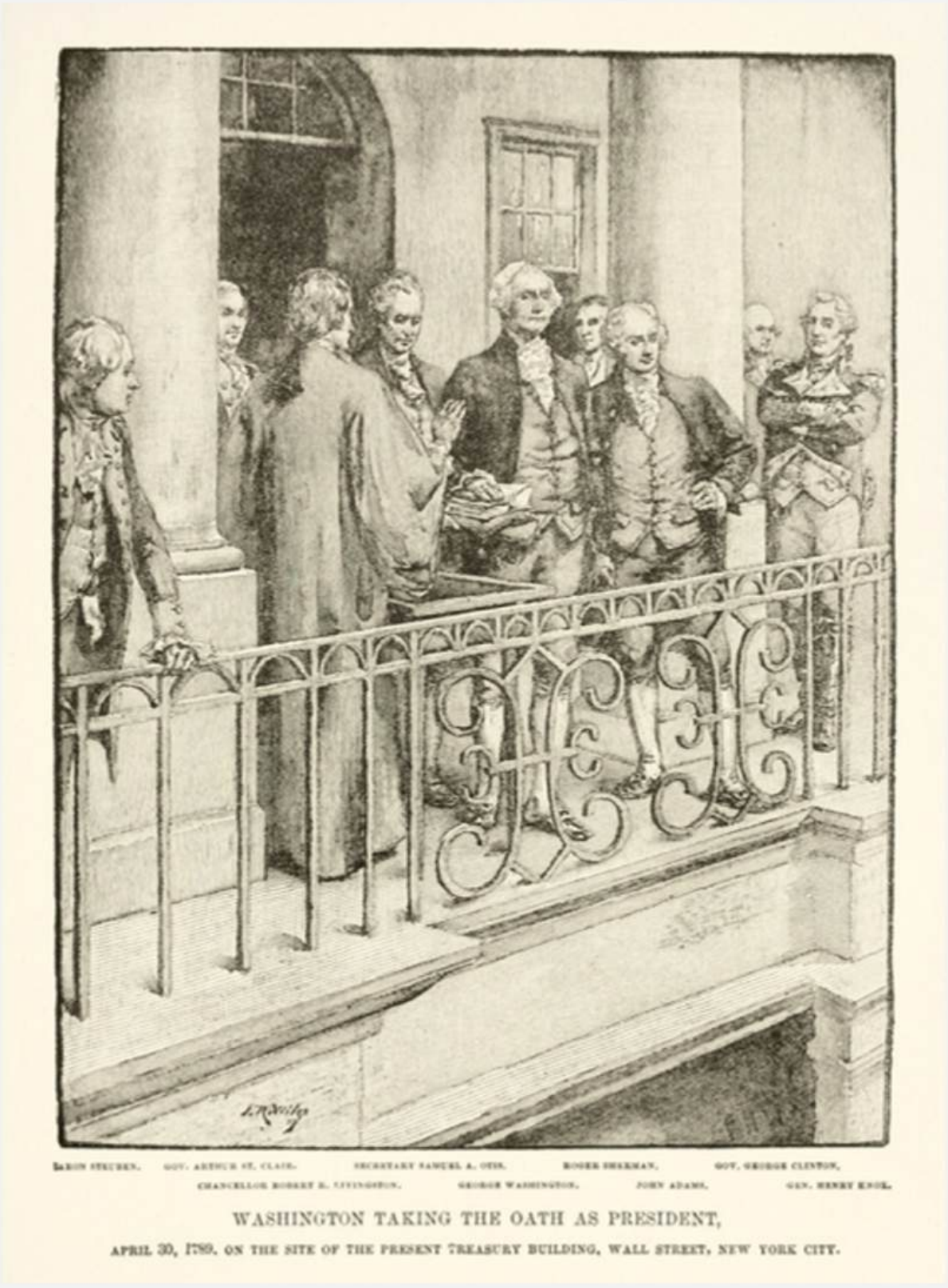
Historical markers for Captain Henry Bird's War Road and Hinkson's/Ruddle's Station (images: Kentucky Historic Marker database)

Explore the ongoing series about John Hinkson at https://lettersfromlabelle.substack.com/t/jhinkson

You can read about the aftermath of the attack and the forced prisoner march to Detroit, as well as the rest of John Hinkson's fantastic story at https://lettersfromlabelle.substack.com/t/jhinkson

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Helene McClanahan



WASHINGTON TAKING THE OATH AS PRESIDENT,

APRIL 30, 1789, ON THE SITE OF THE PRESENT TREASURY BUILDING, WALL STREET, NEW YORK CITY.

Washington Taking the Oath as President, April 30, 1789 on the site of the present Treasury Building, Wall Street, New York City, *from "United States; a history: the most complete and most popular history of the United States of America from the aboriginal times to the present day," 1893 by John Clark Ridpath (1840-1900)*

Credit: *Internet Archive https://archive.org/stream/unitedstates hist00ridp/unitedstateshist00ridp#page/n800/mode/1up.*

RITA MCCONNELL

Rita describes herself as a recovering PR pro with too many opinions. "Genealogy and history are my escapes. Mother of two incredible young women and lucky wife of a great man. Dog lover, hockey fan, struggling gardener, marching band mom. Grateful for my life." https://substack.com/@youcantpickyourfamily

SCAN ME

1781–1782

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

There's always a surprise somewhere in your family tree

A few years ago, television programs where celebrities allowed professional genealogists to research their personal ancestry were running on two networks. Participants often faced familial surprises.

There was an interesting incident where actor Ben Affleck was told by researchers that his ancestors had owned slaves. Affleck was shaken by the revelation. He asked the producers to recut the show, eliminating the section where this information was revealed and focus on something more positive about his family..

Affleck learned one of the hard lessons of genealogy : our family members probably weren't who we think they were. Considering changes in conventional wisdom over the years of human existence, it's really no surprise that these "reveals" occur. There's almost always a secret lurking somewhere.

The Gnadenhutten Historical Society Museum & Park, Gnadenhutten, Ohio

As time goes on, accepted ideas about the way we live and how we act evolve. Currently, we seem to be facing another round of this kind of change. Many of us find our lives under scrutiny from younger people. My children challenge everything my generation did or thought. Yes we really did drink out of the hose, walk to the bus stop alone and wear keys around our necks on string to open the door when we came home from school to an empty house.

In my genealogical research, I've discovered some challenges to my way of thinking that have had me delve into a deeper study of a few specific historical events. What I've learned is that history, particularly the motivations and reasoning of those who lived long ago, is always complex and never clearly identifies "good guys," "bad guys," and "victims."

Pioneers vs. Natives

Not long after all of the 13 North American colonies came under English rule, native tribes became suspicious of the ever expanding boarders of the new settlements. Many raised objections to the intrusion, and in many cases, skirmished violently with colonists. Soon, they learned to play conflicting interests of the English, French and colonists against one another.

While it would be impossible to delve here into a complete profile of native and colonial politics in the 1600s - 1800s, it's important to know that circumstances after the arrival of the French and English aligned a number of tribes, both for and against the colonists. Over time, between the European's initial arrival and the American Revolution, native tribes warred and signed treaties with the French, British, colonists and one another. Some sold off the land of other tribes to which they felt superior, others rejected specific treaties and many young braves and warriors refused to comply. Others "converted" to Christianity. Some helped colonists translate native language and served as guides. To say the very least, tribal relationships with Europeans and other natives were complex.

My husband's ancestors were Scots-Irish, described by historians as Scots who came to the colonies via Ireland. These people, many descended from the storied Highlanders, had experienced the English crown's "plantations," first of the Irish (which in, as mercenaries, many Scots participated) and then of themselves, in which Highland clans lost their lands to the crown and dispersed around Scotland and Ireland. Many came to America from Ireland to Philadelphia in the early to mid-1700s and later. Tough, resilient people, the Scots-Irish sought homes where they could re-establish their lives as farmers and rural dwellers with little interference. They were often among those leading the charge into the colonial frontier, be it south, north or west of Philadelphia.

Having secured land bounties from service in various wars, primarily the French and Indian, and perhaps the purchase of a grant from a Virginian who fought in Lord Dunmore's War, my husband's seventh great grandfather, Alexander; sixth great grandfather, also Alexander, and sixth great grand uncle Matthew began the process of moving their families to Western Pennsylvania - an area under attack by natives who had been promised in the Treaty of Ft. Stanwix that colonists would not settle beyond the Appalachian Mountains. Almost immediately after arriving, our people returned to Carlisle, PA where they had been living. The danger was too real to bring multiple women and children to the area. They soon returned and settled 300 acres in what became - after some negotiating with Virginia - Washington County, Pennsylvania.

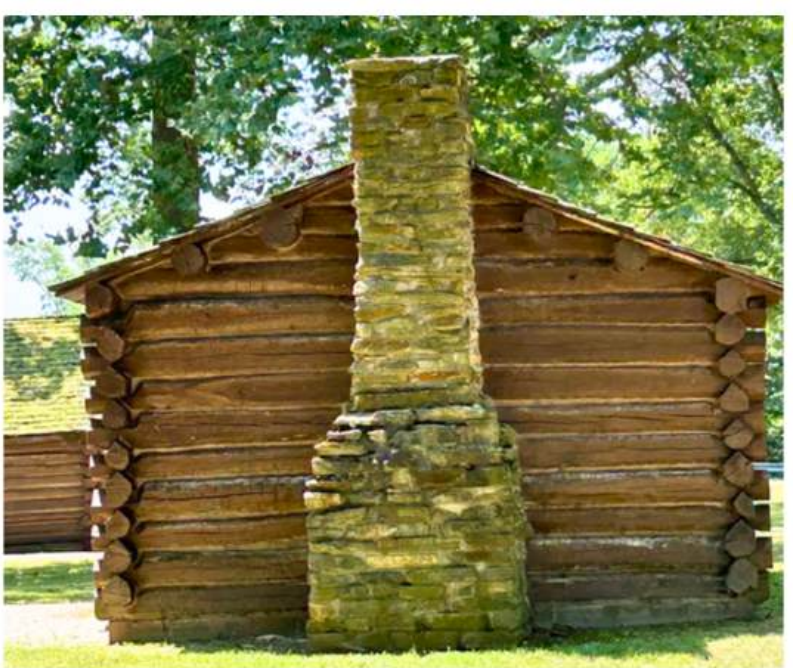
Continued attacks from natives, particularly on women and children while the men were clearing trees, building barns and farm buildings, and planting crops, had settlers regularly petitioning the colonial government in Philadelphia for help and protection. Being comprised primarily of Quakers, colonial officials refused numerous requests for aid. They were pacifists above all, and wanted more to work alongside the natives. Few people in Southwest Pennsylvania, really anywhere in Pennsylvania outside of Philadelphia, had not lost someone, family member, close friend or neighbor to late night raids and convenient attacks on their homes. As a result, the regional settlers formed their own protection bands and helped one another fight off ongoing attacks. History books are full of heartbreaking stories of slaughtered colonists, often young children and babies, and homes lost to arson.

The McConnells, who likely witnessed many such tragedies, were particularly shaken by the killings of the wife and children from a neighboring farm (less than a mile from their own homestead). Like so many pioneers, the family worked their land on their own, with no farm hands or other assistance. The farmer himself had been watched carefully, and when he wandered out of range of his home to work, his wife and children were kidnapped; his wife later found impaled on a tree, her baby daughter dead on the ground. The home was burned.

Attempting to Contain the Threat

In our family, the younger Alexander and his older brother Matthew's military records list them as militia in Col. William Crawford's mission in 1782 to battle natives living along the Sandusky River, believed to be the source of numerous attacks on pioneers from Western Pennsylvania to northern Kansas. Crawford, one of few trained military men sent to the area, relied heavily, not only on local militia, but also local residents for his army. Some were good shots, some pioneering mountain men, but many were unprepared for true combat.

The expedition soon turned disastrous, with Crawford's group being betrayed by a man in their party who had been raised by natives. The colonials were routed by waiting natives. Crawford was captured, tortured, mutilated and burned alive by the tribe. The majority of the company retreated, riding hard back home to safety.



Crawford's mission was preceded by another attempt to eliminate the native danger to western pioneers, which lit the fuse for Crawford's failure at Sandusky. At the same time, the Battle of Yorktowne was wrapping up the Revolution in the East. George Washington, a close friend of Crawford's, suddenly became aware of what had been happening on the frontier while the colonials fought the British Army. While there was great concern, it had become difficult, due to casualties of the war in both man power and supplies, to provide much in the way of professional armed services to serve in a war with natives. A decision was made to gather volunteers from the affected area to fight under Lt. Colonel David Williamson.

About 160 volunteers set out along the Ohio River and came upon a tribal settlement in the Ohio Country along the Tuscarawras River. The settlement was the Moravian town of Gnadenhutten, where native converts to Christianity lived peacefully alongside missionaries and religious leaders. A few months before the colonial volunteers arrived, the Moravians had moved to the Sandusky settlement at the insistence of the Sandusky natives and British troops working to frustrate American expansion into the Ohio Country. Around the same time that Williamson's men were en route to Gnadenhutten, a group of women, children, and older men were sent back to gather the crops the Moravians planted previously.

Seeing activity at a settlement they thought to be abandoned, the volunteers, some of whom were enraged simply by the sight of natives, approached quietly. Believing this group had harbored attackers who regularly killed settlers and destroyed farms in Western Pennsylvania, they disarmed and gathered the natives into buildings on the settlement, men separated from women and children, and tied them together. Williamson and his men spent the night deciding what to do with their captives.

Discussions and votes showed a majority of the men favored killing their captives. About 18 men who refused to participate moved outside the Gnadenhutten encampment so they would not be present during any executions. Williamson himself was apprehensive, and did not want to harm the natives. Howeve, he was overruled by his men, whose overwhelming fear of natives and anger over the repeated attacks that left their families dead and their property burned, had robbed them of clear thinking.

The following day, the Gnadenhutten natives were bludgeoned to death by the volunteers. Ninety-six were killed in the massacre. Two young boys survived.

Was My Family Responsible in Some Way?

I have no documentation that our ancestors were involved in the Gnadenhutten Massacre, but I do know Alexander definitely accompanied Crawford's Expedition to Sandusky, and Matthew, listed as serving under the same Colonel,likely did as well. However, as many of the volunteers from both missions, which occurred about 2 months apart, came from Washington and Westmoreland Counties in Western Pennsylvania, there is a distinct possibility they may have been at Gnadenhutten as well. One would hope in the company of the 18 who resisted the killing.

While Americans, specifically military and government leaders were disgusted by the Massacre, no one was ever held accountable for the horrible actions that took place along the Tuscarawas. Many wonder why.

Was it because numerous Pennsylvanians in the Eastern part of the colony (and many others in the 13 colonies) had experienced continual violence from Native Americans in the years prior to the Massacre? Few instances were prosecuted. Had fighting natives become a normal part of colonial life?

Was it because the Quakers on the Pennsylvania Council felt remorse for having ignored the frontier settlers for so long?

Before the Revolution began, Pennsylvania and Virginia had been fighting for ownership of Western Pennsylvania to gain better access to the Ohio Country. Were the volunteers responsible for the Massacre left alone because colonial investors were already moving to survey and sell off the Ohio Country to interested parties?

Gnadenhutten Now

There's not much left now at Gnadenhutten; just a small national park with reconstructions of the meeting house and some other buildings. Less than a city block in size, it sits among the stones of the community cemetery and a Moravian Church. A large obelisk memorial was placed and dedicated in the 1800s, remembering the natives and Moravians killed there.

Few people today, even those who study the Revolution and the boarder wars between colonists and natives know much about the Gnadenhutten Massacre. It's a relatively new topic to us as well, and we're coming to terms with the possibility people we admire might have participated.

My husband, daughter and I visited the park last week. My husband, who doesn't usually say much about my tracing his ancestors, said to me as we got back into our truck, "It makes me feel kinda guilty of... something." I wonder if this is how Ben Affleck felt.

We may never know the true story about our relatives and Gnadenhutten, but we understand that the world was a different place in 1782. Our people living on the frontier we're holding tightly to what they felt they had lost in Scotland. They found new homesteads in the New World, which they felt they had earned fighting for the life and freedom of the British colonies. While what happened at Gnadenhutten is unforgivable, both sides in the larger boarder battle between pioneers and natives, as well as the enabling British troops remaining in the colonies, may all bear some responsibility for the Massacre.

SOURCES

- *Ahearn, Robert G. American Heritage History of Early America 1492-1776. New Word City, 2015.*
- *Badgley, C. Stephan. An Historical Account of the Expedition Against Sandusky in 1782 Under Col. William Crawford as Told by C.W. Butterfield1824-1899. 2013. Originally published in 1873.*
- *Crumrine, Boyd. History of Washington County, Pennsylvania with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men. L.H.Everts, Philadelphia,PA. 1882.*
- *Egle, William Henry. Pennsylvania in the War of the Revolution: Associated Battalions & Militia 1775-1783, Vol.2. Militia of the Revolution. Lane & Hart. Harrisburg, 1888.*
- *Hurt, R. Douglas. The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest 1720-1830. Indiana university Press. Bloomingtom & Indianapolis, 1996.*
- *O,Brien, Cormac. The Forgotten History of America: Little Known Conflicts of Lasting Importance from the Earliest Colonists to the Eve of the Revolution. Fair Winds Press. Beverly, Mass., 2008*
- *Silver, Peter. Our Savage Neighbors; How Indian War Transformed America. W.W.Norton & Compan. New York, NY, 2008.*
- *Sterner. Eric. The Battle of Upper Sandusky, 1782.Westholmes Publishing, Yardley,PA. 2023.*
- *Taylor, Allen and Eric Foller. American Colonies. Penguin Group. New York, NY, 2001.*

SCAN ME

Article shared from https://youcantpickyourfamily.substack.com/p/who-do-you-think-you-are

Copyright 2026 Rita McConnell

LORI OLSON WHITE

Lori is a Author, Historian, Genealogist and Story Collector and blogs from the Lost and Found Storybox at https://loriolsonwhite.substack.com and Culinary History is Family History at https://culinaryhistoryisfamilyhistory.substack.com. Both are on Substack.

SCAN ME

SCAN ME

SCAN ME

1784–1888

AZUBAH FREEMAN RYDER: PART 1

Front Row to the Republic: Centenarian didn't just witness American history. She lived it.

The Finding America series explores the nation's first 250 years through individual lives – ordinary people who lived close to history as it unfolded. These stories are grounded in records, memory, and place, and focus on how Americans lived while those historic decisions were being made. Together, they trace the slow, human work of building a nation – day by day, household by household, life by life.

Azubah Freeman Ryder, Source: Ancestry.com

A *Child of the New Nation*

Azubah Rebah Freeman was born in Eastham, Massachusetts on January 5, 1784. By all accounts, her birth was not an auspicious event. She was, after all, the eighth daughter, and the tenth of what would be an even dozen children of Timothy Freeman and his wife, Zeruiah Nickerson Freeman.

What would be auspicious, however, was Azubah's front row seat to history.

She was just months old when John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and John Jay signed their names to the Treaty of Paris, the document which officially ended the Revolutionary War and created the independent United States of America.

She was five when General George Washington came out of retirement at Mount Vernon to become America's first president, and just two months past her sixth birthday when the U.S. Constitution went into effect on March 4, 1789.

Azubah's remarkable life would stretch across nearly 105 years, outlasting powerful empires, more than two dozen presidents, and even many of her own children. She would watch her young nation grow from a rough coastline republic of just 13 states into a continental force of 38, bear witness to war, statehood, revival, national trauma, industrialization, expansion and America's first great wave of nostalgia for its own past.

But before all that, she was a child riding into a new and uncertain world – quite literally.

In November 1788, the Freeman family – forty-one-year-old Timothy, thirty-eight-year-old Zeruiah and nine of their eleven children, including four-year-old Azubah, boarded a small sailing vessel bound for the Penobscot River Valley, part of the great post-Revolution migration of Cape Cod families to the District of Maine frontier.

The Penobscot was not yet a place of towns and roads and neighbors. It was wooded, cold, and full of the unpredictable. Moose and bear lived where fences would someday stand. Cabins stood far apart. Winter could make the distance between two homes feel like a continent.

The coastal crossing was rough, and upon landing, Azubah rode behind her mother on horseback from the riverbank to a simple cabin outside of Orrington her father had constructed earlier that year. Timothy had stocked provisions and cut firewood in anticipation of their arrival. He had prepared for nearly everything.

Except what happened next.

Only a month after stepping into their new home, Zeruiah died in childbirth, leaving her husband a widower with a dozen children, six under the age of ten – including the newborn infant she died bringing into the world, and a grief that must have felt as large as the land he was trying to tame.

For Azubah, it meant an early lesson in the fragility of frontier life – a lesson America was learning too. The new nation was unsteady, its future seemingly uncertain.

So was hers.

Timothy and his children were not alone or without family in the Penobscot River Valley after Zeruiah's death, in fact they were surrounded by it. Timothy's paternal uncle, Samuel Freeman, his wife, Mercy Snow Freeman and their five children were also there, having been one of the first Cape Cod families to arrive in Orrington in 1777.

Timothy had lived with his aunt and uncle since his father's death when he was 18, and the two men had owned adjacent farmland back in Eastham. The families remained close for generations.

Members of Zeruiah's immediate family had also made the move to Orrington, including her oldest half-brother, Eliphalet Nickerson, who history records as the first Eastham settler in the valley. Several of her full brothers, sisters and their families were in the area as well.

Beyond family, in-laws and extended family, there were likely others in the diaspora who stepped in to help Timothy raise his motherless children: Federal census records for 1800 indicate 63 of the 112 families living in Orrington at that time had come from Cape Cod. 1

Nearly a century later, Azubah would recall her early childhood as a time of great adventure, frequent danger and growing independence. Among her chores were keeping watch over the

family's cornfield and driving away the black bears who favored cultivated corn over wild berries.

The bears, she remembered, were everywhere.

When she was ten, Azubah's sister, Molly Martha Freeman Freeman, gave birth to a son she and her husband named James. The two homesteads were more than a mile apart with a large woods between them, but the path was well-worn, and Azubah knew the way, so she made the journey alone to visit her newest nephew. She was so pleased with baby James that before she knew it, night had fallen and it was time to return home. Through the woods. In the dark. Alone.

Azubah was halfway home when she saw a large black bear blocking her path.

She was, she recalled "terribly frightened," but also determined to get safely home. Screwing up her courage, the little girl clapped her hands as hard and loudly and she could and then "ran for dear life" the rest of the way home. 2

Courage wasn't the only thing Azubah relied on to handle the unknowns of life on the New England frontier; faith steadied her just as much. As an old woman, she often retold the story of her own religious awakening, a moment that unfolded quietly in a family home near Newburgh during the years of what would later be called the Second Great Awakening.

She'd gone to visit her sister and brother-in-law, Tamsin and Abel Hardy, who lived ten miles west of Orrington in a settlement where the woods pressed close around every clearing. One evening while she was there, Tasmin asked Azubah if she'd mind staying home by herself while they went visiting. Azubah insisted she'd be fine. But when the door closed behind them and the night settled in – thick, wooded, and full of the small sounds that darkness carried – her confidence slipped away.

And so, alone and afraid, Azubah did what many others across New England were doing in those same years.

She prayed.

The Second Great Awakening didn't just happen in great tents or crowded meetinghouses; it lived in households like the Hardys' and the Freemans', carried forward by ordinary people like Azubah who felt God's nearness in the quiet of the night.

She remembered her Bible. She remembered every sermon she'd ever heard. And she remembered the idea – one growing in religious circles across America since the First Great Awakening half a century earlier – that a Heavenly Father watched over the frightened, the isolated, and the uncertain.

Kneeling alone on the wooden floor, Azubah remembered praying "with all her might," and in the stillness that followed, she later said she felt an overwhelming sense of reassurance.

"You are safe," she seemed to hear. "I will take care of you."

Joy replaced fear. Calm replaced dread. Azubah later said she never again felt that same bone-deep terror of being alone.

The following week, while visiting her brother, she told his children what had happened. Their house, like the Hardys', stood alone in the woods, and the children lived with the same mix of real and imagined dangers – bears in the cornfields, unfamiliar noises at night, old stories of Indian raids that continued to drift from one generation to the next.

They asked Azubah to pray with them. She did, and what followed matched countless revival accounts from the era: two of the children experienced religious conversion on the spot. Their parents rejoiced.3

Azubah's was a small story, modest and domestic, but entirely in keeping with the religious transformations reshaping New England at the turn of the century. The Second Great Awakening didn't just happen in great tents or crowded meetinghouses; it lived in households like the Hardys' and the Freemans', carried forward by ordinary people like Azubah who felt God's nearness in the quiet of the night.

Her faith remained steady for the rest of Azubah's life. It was later said of her:

> *She always kept Sunday very strictly, and would never do any work that day except what she was obliged to. Small sins looked large to her, and she would always rebuke the seeming sinner, but never speak of it to others. 4*

Faith, like courage, had been forged early. And it endured.

> *whole tenor of his life. Not a groan nor complaint escaped him though in extreme distress. With perfect resignation and full possession of his reason, he confessed his well spent life." 5*

President John Adams addressed the nation:

> *"It has pleased Divine Providence to remove from this life our excellent fellow citizen, George Washington, by the purity of his character and a long series of services to his country rendered illustrious through the world. It remains for an affectionate and grateful people, in whose hearts he can never die, to pay suitable honor to his memory." 6*

In large cities and small hamlets honor was paid. All business was suspended, as were all amusements. Bells tolled to mark the somber occasion. Minute guns were fired, flags were displayed at half-mast. Church services were held by all denominations and in all languages. Funeral hymns were sung. Speeches and eulogies given.

"It was truly affecting to see the change which suddenly took place," wrote the editor of the Portland, ME Gazette. "The bustle of business gave way at once to the silence of sympathetic sorrow." 7

Although Washington's funeral was held on December 18 at Mount Vernon, the nation needed more time to say goodbye, and continued to mourn for the next five months, culminating in coast-to-coast memorials, ceremonies and solemn parades on May 22 – what would have been the late president's 68th birthday.

In Orrington, sixteen-year-old Azubah found herself pulled into the National Day of Mourning, as well.

The city had set upon a unique service to honor Washington. They'd gathered sixteen sixteen-year-old girls, one to represent each of the sixteen states, dressed them in white, outfitted them with flowers. A symbolic grave had been dug – not deep, just enough to suggest a place where the people could lay their sorrow.

On Saturday, December 14, 1799, America's first president, George Washington, died in his bedchamber at Mount Vernon. Across the country – and the world – grief rose like a tide.

Tobias Lear, Washington's longtime friend and personal secretary made the announcement:

> *"It is with inexpressible grief that I announce to you the death of the great and good General Washington. He died last evening between 10 and 11 o'clock, after a short illness of about twenty-four hours...His last scene corresponded with the*

> *"It is with inexpressible grief that I announce to you the death of the great and good General Washington. He died last evening between 10 and 11 o'clock, after a short illness of about twenty-four hours...His last scene corresponded with the*

As the gathered townspeople listened, a sermon praised Washington's virtues in the same rhythms heard from pulpits in Alexandria, Philadelphia, Charleston and elsewhere. When it ended, Azubah and the other girls moved slowly in a circle, scattering flowers across the open grave. They sang a hymn composed by a local resident – simple, heartfelt, unmistakably American in its blend of reverence and hope, and since lost to history. 8

Azubah would remember that event – and the patriotism and love of country she felt in those moments – for the rest of her life.

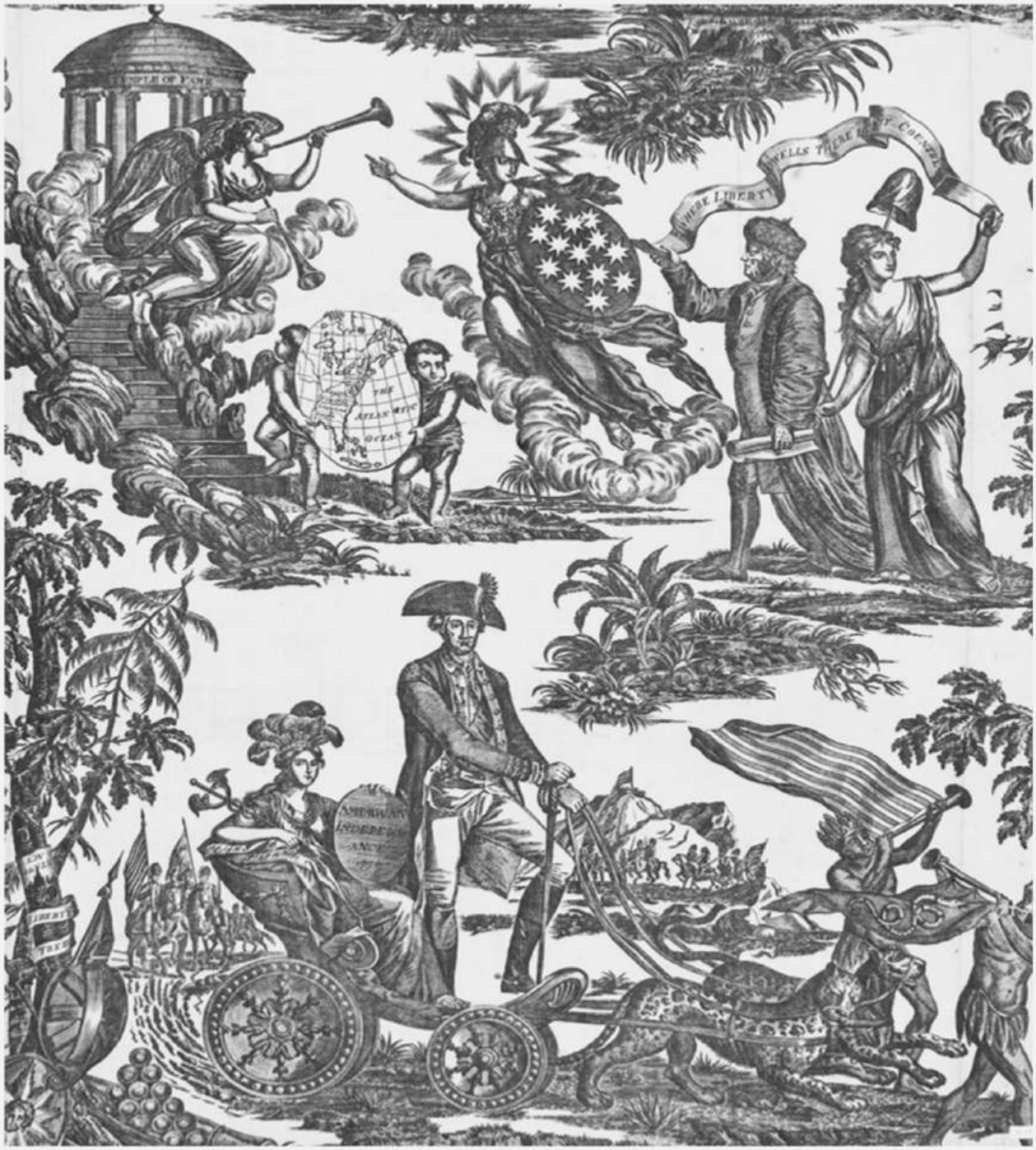
FOOTNOTES

1. *Jamie H. Eves, "The Valley White with Mist," A Cape Cod Colony in Maine, 1770-1820," Maine History, Vol. 32, No. 2, September 1, 1992.*
2. *"Mrs. Azubah Freeman Ryder, A Centenarian," A Short Sketch of the Life of Mrs. Azubah Freman Ryder, A Centenarian: Now Living at the advanced age of 104 years and 6 months. Also, a list of her immediate ancestors and descendants," John Ryder, Publisher, 1838, Boston, MA.*
3. *"Straight as an Arrow, and Living Happily at the Age of 103. Incidents in the Life of Mrs. Aubah F. Ryder of Orrington Centre, ME. She comes of a a Long-Lived Family and Has Scores of Descendants", The Boston Globe, Boston, MA, November 22, 1887, P. 4*
4. *"Straight as an Arrow, and Living Happily at the Age of 103. Incidents in the Life of Mrs. Aubah F. Ryder of Orrington Centre, ME. She comes of a a Long-Lived Family and Has Scores of Descendants", The Boston Globe, Boston, MA, November 22, 1887, P. 4*
5. *"Agonizing Mortality! Washington, the Father of His Country and the Admiration of the World is Dead," Portland Gazette, Portland, ME, December 30, 1799, P. 2.*
6. *"President's Message," Portland Gazette, Portland, ME, December 30, 1799, P. 2.*
7. *"Agonizing Mortality! Washington, the Father of His Country and the Admiration of the World is Dead," Portland Gazette, Portland, ME, December 30, 1799, P. 2.*
8. *"Mrs. Azubah Freeman Ryder, A Centenarian," A Short Sketch of the Life of Mrs. Azubah Freman Ryder, A Centenarian: Now Living at the advanced age of 104 years and 6 months. Also, a list of her immediate ancestors and descendants," John Ryder, Publisher, 1838, Boston, MA.*

Article shared from https://loriolsonwhite.substack.com/p/the-first-100-years-of-azubah-freeman

SCAN ME

Copyright 2026 Lori Olson White



***Apotheosis of Franklin (detail)**, ca. 1790. Cotton and linen. After peace established, British textile manufacturers resume production for the market in the Americas. This print pattern in the style of a French toile, honors Benjamin Franklin after his passing in 1790.*

***Credit:** The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, Bequest of Charles Allen Munn, 1924 (24.109.104)*

Lori is a Author, Historian, Genealogist and Story Collector and blogs from the Lost and Found Storybox at https://loriolsonwhite.substack.com and Culinary History is Family History at https://culinaryhistoryisfamilyhistory.substack.com. Both are on Substack.

SCAN ME

SCAN ME

1784–1888

AZUBAH FREEMAN RYDER: PART 2

Centenarian didn't just witness American history. She lived it.

The Finding America series explores the nation's first 250 years through individual lives – ordinary people who lived close to history as it unfolded. These stories are grounded in records, memory, and place, and focus on how Americans lived while those historic decisions were being made. Together, they trace the slow, human work of building a nation – day by day, household by household, life by life.

People posed on the porch of their cottage, South Orrington. (WikiCommons)

Schooling a Republic

In 1796, George Washington stood before the full Congress of the United States and entreated legislators to invest in public education.

"The assimilation of the principles, opinions and manners of our countrymen, by the common education of a portion of our Youth from every quarter, well deserves attention," he said. "The more homogeneous our citizens can be made in these particulars, the greater will be our prospect of permanent union."

Then he continued:

> *"A primary object of such a national institution should be the education of our Youth in the science of Government. What species of knowledge can be equally important, and what duty more pressing on its Legislature, than to patronize a plan for communicating [the principles, opinions and manners needed to live in a republic] to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?" 1*

Eight years later, 20-year-old Azubah Freeman became part of Washington's vision for education in the young nation, accepting the position of schoolmistress at South Orrington's Pine Top schoolhouse. 2

In her new position, Azubah was responsible for teaching local boys and girls the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic, subjects which were taught primarily through rote memorization, recitation and drills. But, in keeping with Washington's entreaty, she also instructed them in the virtues a self-governing people required – reason, industry, self-restraint, civic engagement, and moral discipline. 3

In many ways, it was a role Azubah had been preparing for her entire life.

Her father, Timothy, had been one of their town's earliest selectmen, and in 1804 the voters of Orrington and Hancock County had sent him to the Massachusetts State House as their elected representative. 4 The journey to Boston – nearly 250 miles on horseback – took days each way. Timothy carried with him the needs of a frontier settlement still not fully recognized by Boston and returned with firsthand insight into how a republic governed itself.

Insight which he likely shared with Azubah, giving her a hands-on civics education long before she ever stepped into a classroom as a teacher.

Around 1806, a young ship captain named Samuel Ryder entered Azubah's life.

His father had built a prosperous store and a handsome two-story house overlooking the Penobscot River, and Samuel himself had gone to sea at a young age, rising quickly through the ranks until he commanded vessels of his own. He was steady, respected, and ambitious – qualities that would have appealed to a young woman raised in a family that valued both industriousness and principle.

Their courtship, family records say, was "discreet," that gentle New England word suggesting a quiet certainty between two people who preferred substance to display.

They married on February 8, 1807. The groom was 22, the bride 23.

Azubah entered into the marriage with "a wedding outfit of linen, cotton and woolen garments, bedclothes, table linen, towels and her wedding dress of white linen," all of which had been manufactured by herself from raw materials. And, as a young wife, she made Samuel's first new suit, as well: a brown, homespun outfit dyed in the wool and fulled at the mill.

"He was very proud of it," Azubah later said. 5

The newlyweds moved in with Timothy, and quickly began raising a family: Samuel Jr. in 1808, Thomas in 1810 and Jane in 1812.

Life moved forward with the rhythm familiar to early 19th-century New England households. Then on June 18, 1812, President James Madison declared war on Great Britain, and everything changed.

By 1814, the war that had burned the U.S. Capitol and battered American ports for two years found its way to the Penobscot River.

On the afternoon of September 3, Azubah was sitting by the window, heavily pregnant with her fourth child, her three small children

playing on the doorstep. When she saw soldiers passing in the distance, she assumed they were local militia.

Minutes later, her sister-in-law, Lydia Ryder Blaisdale, arrived with urgency in her voice: The men weren't militia, she stammered. They were British soldiers, and the British fleet was sailing upriver.

The Battle of Hampden was already unfolding just a few miles away. The U.S. ship Adams, crippled and trapped, had been burned by her crew to avoid capture. Panic rippled across the countryside.

Azubah gathered her children and fled through the woods toward Orrington Center, warning neighbors along the way. Family tradition later compared her to Paul Revere, carrying the alarm from house to house.

That night, sheltered at the home of a local sea captain named Barzillai Rich, Azubah gave birth to a daughter she named Deborah after her sister-in-law.

Family accounts would later say that Samuel – serving with the local militia – was tasked with rowing four officers from the Adams to Boston in a small open boat. Surviving military records describe the officers' escape differently, but agree on the broader reality: men vanished for days or weeks, communication collapsed, and families were left waiting. 6

In Samuel's case, Azubah and the children waited anxiously for two long weeks.

When at last he returned, exhausted but alive, he was welcomed "as one returned from the dead." 7

The years that followed the War of 1812 were quieter – but no less demanding.

Maine was still Massachusetts then, governed at a distance, its eastern frontier newly exposed and deeply mistrustful of that distance. The memory of British occupation lingered, feeding resentment, vulnerability, and ultimately the long push toward

statehood. When Maine finally entered the Union in 1820, Azubah was thirty-six years old.

Soon her life settled into patterns that would repeat for decades.

She raised children – eight in all – many of them drawn, like their father, to the sea. She lived with loss. Sailors rarely died at home.

One son would perish of yellow fever in Havana in 1853, far from Orrington, tended by strangers. 8 In 1846 another voyage would spark fear when Samuel's vessel, the Boston Packet, was reported missing after being last seen in a snowstorm off Seguin. For weeks, newspapers carried the notice. "Strong apprehensions are felt for his safety," they wrote. Samuel did return, although many other seafaring men did not. 9

Azubah buried her father in 1828, her husband in 1861, and, by 1871, all 11 of her siblings.

She buried five of her children.

She watched grandchildren go off to war and return home changed.

Azubah didn't leave diaries. She didn't write memoirs. What remains of her voice comes to us indirectly – through family sketches, newspaper profiles, centennial speeches, and the fragments of remembered stories passed down and polished by time.

But absence is a historical fact, too.

What we know is this: Azubah lived long enough to see the nation she entered as an infant nearly tear itself apart and then knit itself back together. She lived through abolition, emancipation and reconstruction; though temperance and revivalism, financial booms and busts, industrialization, railroads and western expansion, and through the slow opening of Maine – and America – to tourism and memory.

Azubah didn't live at the center of power, she lived at the center of continuity.

By the 1880s, Azubah herself had become a kind of local landmark.

Newspapers marveled at her posture, her clarity of mind, her steady habits.

"She is straight as an arrow and very handsome, sweet and neat," noted the *Boston Globe* in 1887. "She puts off and on her clothing without assistance, makes her own bed and likes to wash dishes and sweep the room." 10

And reporters counted her descendants as if measuring time itself through her body.

> *"Mrs. Ryder has 19 living grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren. She has lived under the administration of all our presidents and outlived all but two of them. She was 35 years 4 months and 19 days old when Queen Victoria was born. Fulton's first steamboat made its trial trip the same year, 1807, that her eldest son was born." 11*

When Orrington marked its centennial over the July 4th weekend of 1888, Azubah was brought to the ceremony in a carriage accompanied by a granddaughter, seated among dignitaries and honored before the crowd. The chairman of the celebration introduced her not just as the town's oldest resident, but as a living link to its earliest days.

> *"It is my pleasure and honor to present and introduce to you today, Mrs. Azubah Freeman Ryder, a woman almost one hundred and five years old and the oldest inhabitant of the place, of not of New England. It is a sight not one in this congregation nor probably one in a thousand such congregations will ever see again. It is a wonder to contemplate a woman who has passed a life of virtue, extending over one hundred and five years, or five years longer than the time when this town was incorporated." 12*

The audience rose to their feet in wild applause.

A month later, Azubah's eldest son, Samuel, passed away. He was "just" 80.

Thirty-three days later, on September 30, 1888, Azubah Rebah Freeman Ryder died at home surrounded by loved ones. Her age was recorded as 104 years, 8 months and 25 days – every extra day a gift.

She was buried beside her husband on a hill in South Orrington, the river still running below, the woods still pressing close, and the

century-old republic she'd love steadfastly for her entire life still an optimistic and unfinished experiment.

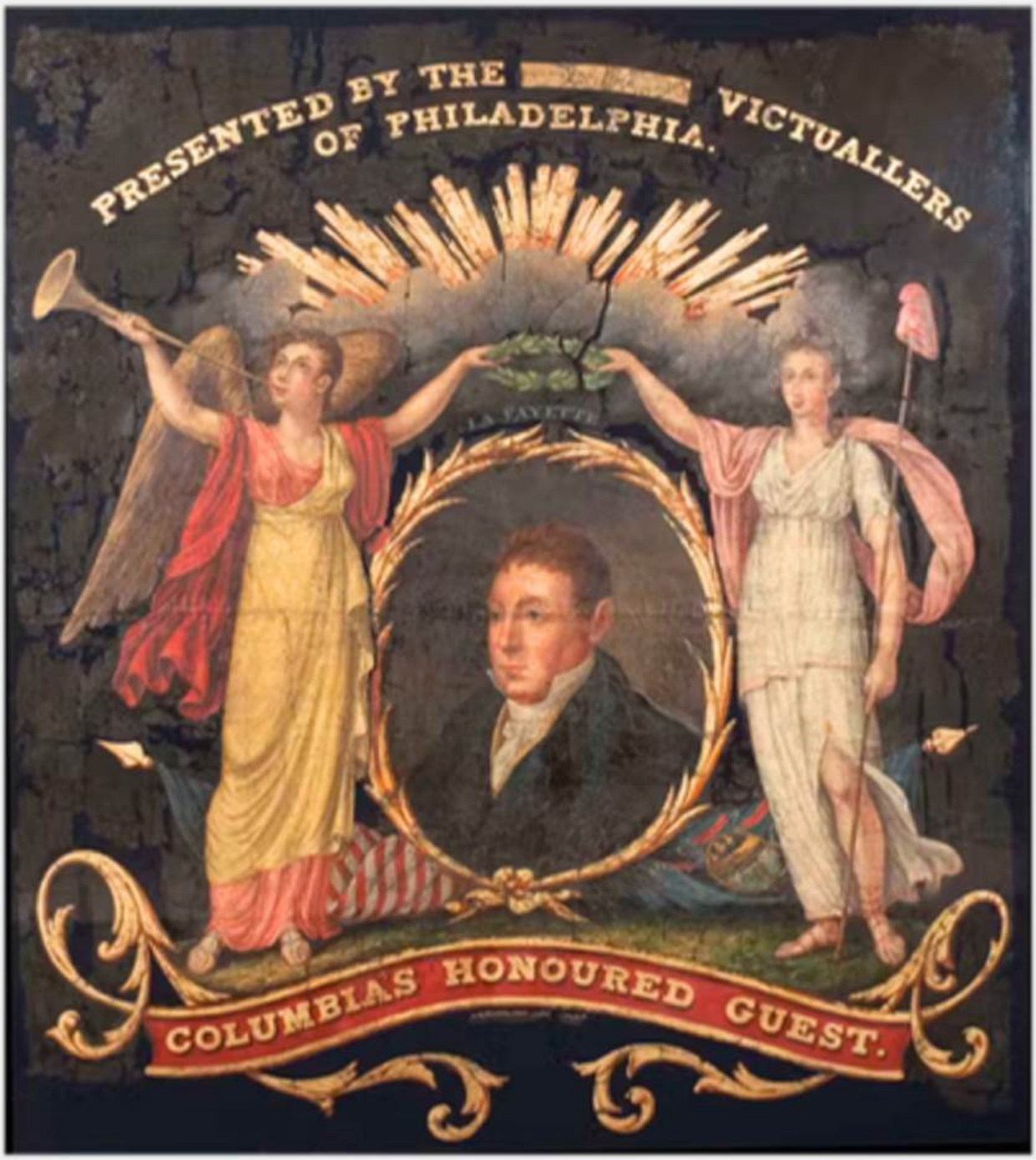
Article shared from https://loriolsonwhite.substack.com/p/azubah-freeman-ryder-front-row-to

FOOTNOTES

1. *"George Washington to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, 7 December 1796 George Washington," Founders Online, National Archives.*
2. *"Mrs. Azubah Freeman Ryder, A Centenarian," A Short Sketch of the Life of Mrs. Azubah Freman Ryder, A Centenarian: Now Living at the advanced age of 104 years and 6 months. Also, a list of her immediate ancestors and descendants," John Ryder, Publisher, 1838, Boston, MA.*
3. *Charles R. Kessler, "Education and Politics: Lessons from the American Founding," University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1991: Issue 1, Article 6.*
4. *"Mrs. Azubah Freeman Ryder, A Centenarian," A Short Sketch of the Life of Mrs. Azubah Freman Ryder, A Centenarian: Now Living at the advanced age of 104 years and 6 months. Also, a list of her immediate ancestors and descendants," John Ryder, Publisher, 1838, Boston, MA*
5. *"Straight as an Arrow, and Living Happily at the Age of 103. Incidents in the Life of Mrs. Aubah F. Ryder of Orrington Centre, ME. She comes of a a Long-Lived Family and Has Scores of Descendants", The Boston Globe, Boston, MA, November 22, 1887, P. 4.*
6. *Harry J. Chapman, "The Battle of Hampden," Sprague's Journal of Maine History, Vol. II No. 4, October, 1914, P. 185-193.*
7. *"Mrs. Azubah Freeman Ryder, A Centenarian," A Short Sketch of the Life of Mrs. Azubah Freman Ryder, A Centenarian: Now Living at the advanced age of 104 years and 6 months. Also, a list of her immediate ancestors and descendants," John Ryder, Publisher, 1838, Boston, MA*
8. *"To the Editor of the Whig and Courier," Bangor Daily Whig and. Courier, Bangor, ME, March 29, 1854, P. 2.*
9. *"Missing Vessel," Bangor Weekly Courier, Bangor, ME, February 17, 1846, P. 1.*
10. *"Straight as an Arrow, and Living Happily at the Age of 103. Incidents in the Life of Mrs. Aubah F. Ryder of Orrington Centre, ME. She comes of a a Long-Lived Family and Has Scores of Descendants", The Boston Globe, Boston, MA, November 22, 1887, P. 4.*
11. *"Straight as an Arrow, and Living Happily at the Age of 103. Incidents in the Life of Mrs. Aubah F. Ryder of Orrington Centre, ME. She comes of a a Long-Lived Family and Has Scores of Descendants", The Boston Globe, Boston, MA, November 22, 1887, P. 4.*
12. *"One Hundred Years: Orrington's Centennial Observed with Fitting Ceremonies. A Town with a History, Its Citizens and Deds, Addresses and Poems, Distinguished Visitors and The Oldest Resident", The Bucksport Clipper, Bucksport, ME, July 5, 1888, P. 4.*

The Finding America series explores the nation's first 250 years through individual lives – ordinary people who lived close to history as it unfolded. Visit the archives to read the entire series. https://loriolsonwhite.substack.com/p/finding-america

Copyright 2026 Lori Olson White



Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834), *the idealistic young aristocrat who played key roles in both the American Revolutionary War and the French Revolution, was feted on his return to America in August 1824 for what turned into a national tour that lasted until September 1825. Unlike the many mass-produced trinkets that celebrated the visit, this hand-painted silk banner was carried during the procession through the streets of Philadelphia during his visit in 1824.*

Credit: *Painted by John Archibald Woodside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1824. Silk, Paint. In the collection of the Museum of the American Revolution, 2003.00.04*

INDEX OF INDIVIDUALS

A

- Abel, Patrick (1757–1844) — p. 311
- Acker, John B. (1759–1786) — p. 349
- Adams, John (1740–1819) — p. 149
- Alden, John — p. 14, 15
- Alden, Joseph — p. 15
- Alden, Priscilla Mullins — p. 14, 15
- Alexander, William [Lord Stirling] — p. 40, 41, 42

B

- Bancroft, Ebenezer (1738–1827) — p. 141
- **Bayang, Kyla, contributor** — p. 123
- Bentley, George (1758–1839) — p. 329
- Bucknam, Joses (1760–1835) — p. 583
- **Burley, Diane, contributor** — p. 13, 133, 251
- Burnham, Joshua (1754–1835) — p. 271

C

- **Callin, Tad, contributor** — p. 307, 465
- **Carl, Deborah, contributor** — p. 27, 141, 183, 185, 225, 311, 329, 411, 435
- **Chapman, Jane, contributor** — p. 173, 245
- Chauncy, John Stocking (1751–1777) — p. 255
- Cleveland, Aaron (1744–1778) — p. 185
- Coffin, Isaac (1759–1839) — p. 51, 52, 54
- Coffin, John (1729–1808) — p. 51, 52
- Coffin, John [General] (1756–1838) — p. 51, 52, 54
- Coffin, Tristram (1609–1681) — p. 46, 52
- Coffin, William (1720–1803) — p. 45, 48, 49, 52
- Coon, Hanness — p. 56
- Coon, Mary [see Rushton, Mary Coon]

D

- Dana, Edmund (1739 – 1823) — p. 21, 22, 24
- Dana, Eleanor (Brown) (1744-1837) — p. 193, 194, 195, 196, 197
- Dana, Francis (1743–1811) — p. 22, 23, 24
- Dana, Richard (1700–1772) — p. 21, 22, 24
- Dana, Stephen (1740-1822) — p. 193, 195, 196, 197
- **Davies, Dai, contributor** — p. 421

- Duff, William (1754–1795) — p. 267
- Durfee, Joseph (1734–1801) — p. 101

E

- Ellery, Elizabeth (1751–1807) — p. 22
- Ellery, William — p. 22, 23

F

- Fishley, George (1760–1851) — p. 373
- Flint, Jonathan (1730–1800) — p. 91

G

- Gray, Samuel (1751–1835) — p. 245

H

- Hinkson, John (1729–1789) — p. 75, 189
- **Hoover, Erin**, **contributor** — p. 207

K

- **Kawamura, Carole Kuge**, **contributor** — p. 343

L

- Lang, Richard (1744–1817) — p. 173
- **Leonard, Rick**, **contributor** — p. 461

M

- **Marshall, Mary (Dr.)**, **contributor** — p. 427
- **McClanahan, Helene**, **contributor** — p. 73, 189
- **McConnell, Rita**, **contributor** — p. 503
- McCullough, James Sr. (1756–1844) — p. 507
- **Moore, Bill**, **contributor** — p. 25, 237, 441
- **Moore, Garry E**, **contributor** — p. 455
- Munroe, Andrew (1764–1836) — p. 417

N

- Naylor, Joshua (1751–1835) — p. 237

O

- Oxendine, Catherine (1778–1850) — p. 473

R

- Rector, George (1759–1786) — p. 367
- Richards, Elisha (1735–1778) — p. 123
- **Rojo, Heather**, **contributor** — p. 91, 271, 417
- Ross, Ezekiel (1756–1845) — p. 36, 42, 281
- Rushton, John (1735–1801) — p. 55, 56, 113
- Rushton, Mary Coon (1727–1822) — p. 55, 56
- Rushton, Sarah Hall (1753–1839) — p. 257
- Ryder, Azubah Freeman (1784–1888) — p. 511, 519
- Ryerson, Jane (1752–1829) — p. 251

S

- Seaver, Norman (1734–1784) — p. 85
- **Seaver, Randy**, **contributor** — p. 95
- Skelly, Francis (1751–1793) — p. 217
- Spencer, Peter (1744–1778) — p. 185
- Strong, Susan (1809–1875) — p. 2
- Stufflebean, John (1756–1844) — p. 275
- **Stufflebean, Linda**, **contributor** — p. 149, 275, 383
- Sumner, Mary (Joslin) — p. 15, 17, 18
- Sumner, Roger — p. 15, 17, 18
- Sumner, Waitstill (b. 1661) — p. 14, 16, 17, 19

T

- **Taylor, Maureen**, **contributor** — p. 373, 389, 453
- **Tien, Barbara**, **contributor** — p. 37, 45, 281

V

- Van Wart, Isaac (1762–1828) — p. 391

W

- **Wendel, Anne**, **contributor** — p. 55, 101, 113, 155, 257, 289, 315, 335, 349, 367, 391, 439, 473
- **White, Lori Olson**, **contributor** — p. 511, 519
- Willey, Abel (1749–1834) — p. 183
- Williamson, Isaac (1758–1839) — p. 335

Y

- **Young, Anne**, **contributor** — p. 21, 33, 181, 193, 217, 233, 267

INDEX OF PLACES

North America

Canada

- **New Brunswick** — p. 66, 67, 133, 135, 136, 150, 152, 162, 163, 164
  - Adams Island — p. 153
  - Deer Island — p. 152, 153
  - Fort Cumberland — p. 66, 67
  - Fredericton — p. 153
  - Maugerville — p. 153
  - Parrtown (Saint John) — p. 150
  - Rusagonis Creek — p. 153
  - Saint John — p. 150, 163
  - West Isles, Charlotte — p. 152, 153

- **Nova Scotia** — p. 56, 66, 68, 71, 72, 95, 97, 109, 110, 111, 118, 149, 151, 153, 162, 167, 168, 182
  - Cobequid Mountains — p. 66
  - Gunning Cove — p. 167, 168, 169
  - Halifax — p. 66, 109, 163
  - Pilot Town — p. 167, 168
  - Port Roseway — p. 108, 109
  - Ramsheg — p. 66
  - Shelburne (Shelburne Harbour) — p. 103, 106, 109, 110, 167, 168, 169
- **Ontario** — p. 182

- **Prince Edward Island** (St. John's Island) — p. 182, 183, 184
  - East Point — p. 183
  - North Lake — p. 184
  - Surveyor's Inlet — p. 184

- **Quebec** — p. 48, 51, 122, 136, 139, 140, 182, 267
  - Montreal — p. 139

United States

- **Connecticut** — p. 23, 24, 25, 29, 35, 95, 106, 107, 112, 113, 115, 120, 125, 126, 134, 135, 138, 140, 141, 148, 150, 151, 163, 164
  - Ashford — p. 35
  - Colchester — p. 30
  - East Haddam — p. 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 178, 189, 190
  - Fairfield County — p. 150, 152
  - Hartford — p. 24, 30, 112, 117, 124, 125, 130
  - Litchfield County — p. 130
  - Middletown — p. 95, 112, 117, 118, 125, 130, 131
  - New Haven — p. 130
  - New London — p. 25, 30, 148, 164
  - New Milford — p. 136, 151
  - Norfolk — p. 112, 117, 125, 130
  - Stamford — p. 156, 163
  - Torrington — p. 130

- **Delaware** — p. 50, 166
  - Wilmington — p. 50

- **Florida** — p. 48, 115, 179
  - St. Augustine — p. 179

- **Georgia** — p. 43, 48, 50, 51
  - Savannah — p. 48

- **Kentucky** — p. 73, 74, 75, 78, 86, 189
  - Bluegrass region — p. 73
  - Bourbon County — p. 74

- **Maine** — p. 138, 143, 153, 164
  - Portland — p. 143

- **Massachusetts** — p. 12, 13, 15, 18, 20, 21, 23, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 38, 40, 44, 46, 47, 50, 52, 53, 54, 60, 61, 79, 82, 85, 87, 88, 93, 98, 100, 105, 114, 127, 128, 130, 131, 132, 142, 143, 145, 146, 151, 168, 173, 174, 175, 194, 195, 196, 417, 419
  - Arlington — p. 35
  - Boston — p. 15, 19, 21, 29, 30, 32, 40, 47, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 82, 84, 87, 92, 100, 102, 114, 140, 142, 173, 175, 195, 196

- **Massachusetts** (cont)
  - Bunker Hill — p. 32, 40, 43, 51, 82, 92, 127, 128, 142
  - Cambridge — p. 24, 30, 35, 36, 85, 86, 96, 97, 156, 173, 175, 194, 196
  - Chelmsford — p. 142, 143, 146
  - Concord — p. 32, 35, 36, 40, 53, 61, 82, 85, 86, 87, 92, 97, 142
  - Danvers — p. 93
  - Dartmouth — p. 105
  - Dorchester — p. 18, 19
  - Dunstable — p. 142, 145, 146
  - Haverhill — p. 46
  - Lancaster — p. 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
  - Lexington — p. 28, 32, 34, 35, 36, 40, 82, 85, 86, 87, 92, 93, 96, 97, 98, 142, 173, 174, 194, 195, 417
  - Nantucket Island — p. 44, 45, 46, 47, 52, 53
  - Newbury (Newburyport) — p. 46
  - North Reading — p. 82, 92
  - Peabody — p. 93
  - Plymouth (Plymouth Bay) — p. 12, 14, 15, 16, 17
  - Reading — p. 8, 91, 146
  - Roxbury — p. 19, 35, 194
  - Salem — p. 93
  - Tyngsborough — p. 142, 143, 145, 146
  - Watertown — p. 151
  - Wilmington — p. 143, 145, 147
  - Woburn — p. 93

- **New Hampshire** — p. 7, 8, 23, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 120, 121, 131, 132, 134, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147, 182, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 271
  - Campton — p. 7, 8, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 178, 188, 189, 190, 191
  - Hanover — p. 120, 134, 140
  - Hollis Street — p. 144
  - Londonderry — p. 142
  - Milford — p. 8, 93, 271
  - Nashua — p. 16, 129, 130, 132, 144, 145, 146, 147
  - Plymouth — p. 26, 31, 191
  - Rumney — p. 25, 26, 31
  - Salisbury — p. 188
  - Thornton — p. 25, 26, 31

- **New Jersey** — p. 22, 26, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 41, 42, 43, 51, 112, 134, 136, 141, 143, 144, 145, 146, 151, 153, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 171, 182, 183
  - Amboy — p. 33, 34, 40, 41
  - Barnegat — p. 145, 161
  - Burlington County — p. 22, 26
  - Elizabeth Town — p. 33, 34, 35, 36, 40, 41, 42, 43, 144, 160
  - Forked River — p. 144, 145, 160, 161
  - Hunterdon County — p. 22, 26
  - Maidenhead — p. 22, 26
  - Monmouth County — p. 144, 145, 160, 161
  - Newark — p. 156
  - Newark Bay — p. 33, 40
  - New Brunswick — p. 144, 160
  - Raritan River — p. 33, 40, 160
  - Refugetown (Sandy Hook) — p. 145, 161
  - Sandy Hook — p. 32, 33, 34, 39, 41, 145, 146, 161, 162
  - Toms River — p. 140, 144, 145, 146, 155, 156, 160, 161, 162, 171
  - Woodbridge — p. 144, 160

- **New York** — p. 25, 26, 31, 33, 34, 35, 41, 43, 47, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 79, 95, 96, 97, 100, 107, 108, 109, 112, 113, 114, 120, 121, 126, 127, 134, 136, 140, 141, 142, 143, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 162, 164, 167, 182
  - Albany — p. 26, 31, 112, 114
  - Bronx — p. 150, 166
  - Fort Edward — p. 167
  - Hell Gate — p. 150, 155, 166
  - Hempstead — p. 56, 62, 65, 71, 140, 156
  - Hoosick (Rensselaer) — p. 25, 26, 31
  - Long Island — p. 100, 112, 140, 141, 143, 147, 148, 156, 157, 158, 159, 163, 166
  - Manhattan Island — p. 97, 109, 140, 141, 150, 156, 157, 166
  - Mamaroneck — p. 63, 156
  - New Rochelle — p. 156
  - New York City (New York Harbour) — p. 39, 40, 41, 47, 48, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 65, 66, 70, 71, 108, 109, 112, 140, 141, 142, 146, 150, 151, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 162, 164, 166, 183

- **New York** (cont.)
  - Queens — p. 150, 166
  - Rensselaer — p. 31
  - Rye — p. 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 71
  - Scarsdale — p. 48, 56, 60, 69
  - Staten Island — p. 100, 112
  - Westchester County — p. 48, 49, 51, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 65, 66, 68, 70, 141, 143, 159
  - White Plains — p. 48, 52, 55, 56, 60, 63, 69, 140, 156

- **North Carolina** — p. 39, 40, 48, 50, 52, 53, 77, 86, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 113, 114, 115, 117, 158
  - Albemarle Sound — p. 39, 40, 45, 53
  - Greensboro — p. 40
  - Guilford Court House — p. 41, 42, 45, 50, 53
  - Hillsborough — p. 105, 106, 117, 118
  - New Garden — p. 40, 41, 42, 45, 50, 53
  - Perquimans County — p. 39
  - Wake County — p. 102, 107, 109, 114, 119, 121

- **Pennsylvania** — p. 7, 9, 31, 36, 38, 39, 60, 62, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 109, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 165, 167, 170
  - Allegheny Mountains — p. 64, 73, 80, 81, 115, 128
  - Carlisle — p. 79
  - Cumberland County — p. 9, 60, 62, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89
  - Forty Fort — p. 113, 114, 115, 116, 126, 127, 128, 129
  - Great Cove — p. 87
  - Hopewell Township — p. 68, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 89
  - Philadelphia — p. 38, 79, 88, 109, 121, 165
  - Susquehanna River — p. 68, 69, 72, 77, 78, 81, 113, 114, 126, 127
  - Valley Forge — p. 167, 170
  - Westmoreland County — p. 65, 70, 71, 74, 79, 80, 81, 89, 90, 113, 126
  - Wilkes-Barre — p. 111, 112, 113, 116, 117, 118, 125, 131
  - Wyoming Valley (Wyoming) — p. 9, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131

- **Rhode Island** — p. 14, 16, 20, 23, 31, 40, 48, 52, 53, 82, 85, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 98, 99, 101, 105, 106, 107, 134, 150, 173, 175, 194, 217
  - Middletown — p. 95, 107
  - Newport — p. 93, 94, 95, 105, 106, 107, 165
  - Portsmouth — p. 93, 99, 105, 111
  - Providence Plantations — p. 20, 23

- **South Carolina** — p. 5, 27, 42, 43, 50, 51, 96, 99, 108, 158, 159, 160, 161, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179
  - Charleston — p. 40, 46, 96, 99, 108
  - Congaree River (Trading Post) — p. 158, 159, 160, 174, 175, 176
  - Lexington County — p. 159, 176
  - Little River — p. 161, 178
  - Newberry County — p. 161, 162, 178, 179
  - Saluda Valley (Greenville County) — p. 160, 161, 177, 178
  - Santee River — p. 158, 175
  - Saxe-Gotha Township — p. 5, 158, 159, 160, 162, 175, 176, 177, 179

- **Vermont** — p. 25, 31, 121, 122, 125, 134, 135, 137, 139, 140, 168, 170, 188, 191
  - Bethel — p. 121, 122, 124, 126, 135, 138, 140
  - Royalton (South Royalton) — p. 8, 121, 122, 125, 126, 133, 135, 136, 138, 139, 140
  - Sharon — p. 122, 136
  - Townsend (Townshend) — p. 122, 136

- **Virginia** — p. 25, 31, 40, 42, 48, 50, 52, 54, 62, 77, 78, 86, 108, 120, 158, 174, 175

- **West Virginia** — p. 25, 26, 31, 69, 77, 78, 86
  - Parkersburg — p. 26, 31
  - Vienna (Cook) — p. 25, 31

Europe

France
— p. 40, 42, 43, 49, 50, 79, 84

Germany
— p. 6, 49, 50, 57, 60, 61, 81, 159, 176
- **Saxe Gotha** — p. 159, 176

Netherlands
— p. 12, 14, 166
- **Leiden** — p. 12, 14

Russia
— p. 20, 23

Spain
— p. 79, 84, 102, 107, 114, 116, 119, 121

United Kingdom
— p. 32, 47, 48, 54, 164, 182

- **England** — p. 12, 13, 14, 21, 22, 32, 38, 46, 47, 48, 54, 56, 58, 62, 103, 111, 120, 140, 151, 157, 162, 164, 165, 166, 174, 182, 184
  - Brixton, Devonshire — p. 38, 46
  - London — p. 32, 39, 41, 58, 84, 120, 165, 166, 183, 184

- **Ireland** (Ulster) — p. 48, 49, 56, 57, 60, 62, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81, 85, 86, 164, 182
  - Tyrone — p. 67, 76, 80

- **Wales** — p. 7, 49, 57, 157, 174
  - Cellan — p. 7, 421

PROJECT KIN

Explore the articles in this magazine on our website, in a timeline and on a map at

Projectkin.org/stories250

SCAN ME

PROJECT Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful so many friends, colleagues, and supporters who've encouraged, supported, and contributed to this project. Without you this would not have happened at all. In many ways, this project demonstrates how with the right networks of support one idea can be free to explore another.

The seed for this project was planted in 2024 when my sisters in the Acalanes DAR Chapter near the town of Lafayette, California, started planning for ways to celebrate the 2024-25 Bicentennial of the National Tour of the Marquis de Lafayette. Their encouragement led to an exploration of whether our ancestors might have met General Lafayette on his national tour in 1824-25. More at https://projectkin.org/lafayette.

For that project, I relied heavily on KnightLab's timeline tool for journalists at Northwestern University. When I read Jane Chapman's series about her ancestor, Richard Lang, a Patriot, Loyalist, and Spaniard — I was smitten. Jane is a New Zealander and active community member making me realize just how our 18th-century roots have intertwined us with a history that extends across political borders. This semi-quincentennial celebration of our declaration of independence had to go global.

When I put the call out for stories, more than twenty collaborators jumped in to contribute over sixty stories. I am deeply grateful to every one of these authors. They've given me the confidence to push forward with this project and I'm stunned by the results. Each of these stories creates a new context for the framework of the history thought we knew. Together, they remind us of where we came from and how much lies ahead for our descendants.

On this next page you'll find convenient QR code links to our authors' continuing contributions to the legacy of their ancestors 250 years ago.

Explore more **Stories250** from our contributors...

ANNE WENDEL

ANNE YOUNG

BARBARA TIEN

BILL MOORE

CAROLE KUGE KAWAMURA

DAI DAVIES

DEBORAH CARL

DIANE BURLEY

ERIN HOOVER

GARRY E. MOORE

HEATHER ROJO

HELENE MCCLANAHAN

JANE CHAPMAN

KYLA BAYANG

LINDA STUFFLEBEAN

LORI OLSON WHITE

DR. MARY MARSHALL

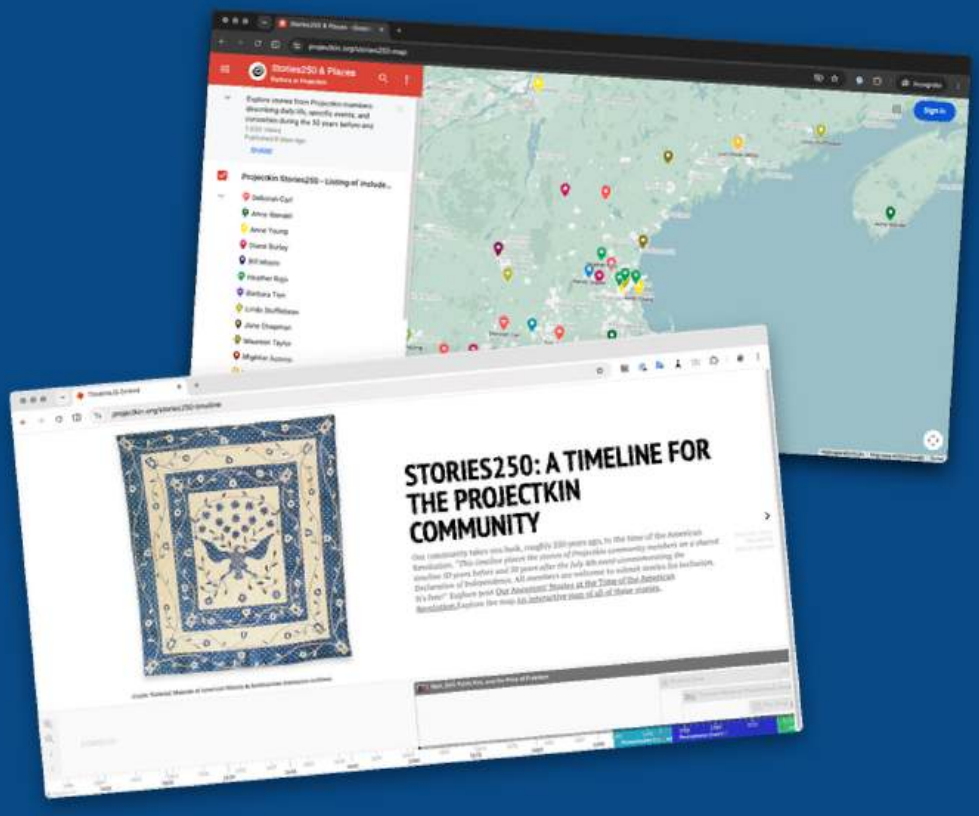
MAUREEN TAYLOR

RANDY SEAVER

RICK LEONARD

RITA MCCONNELL

TAD CALLIN



This special program collected the stories of our ancestors around the time of the Declaration of Independence (give or take 50 years). Stories could be set anywhere in the world and published on any public platform as long as they are true and related to our authors' ancestors. These stories are now...

- compiled on a **website** (Projectkin.org/stories250)
- in an interactive **timeline** (Projectkin.org/stories250-timeline)
- annotated on a **map** (Projectkin.org/stories250-map)
- retold in live **recordings** (Projectkin.org/stories250-live)

To explore the series and learn more about this series and other series to follow, please visit Projectkin.org/stories250. Participation in this program was offered free to all authors and links were provided for the purchase of private copies. If you'd like to know more about this unique program, please visit us at Projectkin.org.

PROJECT KIN
PROJECTKIN.ORG

STORIES 250

Stories250 is our Projectkin twist on American celebrations of the semi-quincentennial of our founding. At Projectkin, we wanted to recognize that the American Revolution and the period leading up to it had an impact on our ancestors everywhere around world. As a community of family historians and genealogiests, that led us to ask each other:

Where were YOUR ancestors on July 4, 1776?

(Since communications moved slowly in the days of candles, sails, and hooves, we're adding 50 years on either side to include stories of our ancestors who lived between 1726 and 1826.)

To learn more about our community, projects, and events, please visit **Projectkin.org**.

PROJECT KIN